

#43

Check Mark

One of my jobs at the golf course was to water at night.
Turning sprinklers on in a sequence,
to get the best performance and
not to burn up the pump or blow a pipe.

I had a golf cart that did his job,
old #43,
with a bent governor for speed
and headlights to see.

This was all play at an early age, not yet knowing the drudgery
to come.

For there were wet shoes and green socks,
broken pipes and ditches to be dug,
smashed knuckles and pond water filth,
cuts for purple primer to burn,
and a hide to bake in the sun.

#43 did his fair share of that work.
I think often back to our times alone.
Together we would listen to the sprinklers and the silence that stood
around.

I will never forget #43, work horse in the day and my
companion in the night.

untitled

Adam

Labor, drives the evolution of man
created as a laborer
by those who defeneded from these stars
the worker race
made in their image

set apart
once among the animals
remade and set above
"they have become like us"
the seed of knowledge within

sent to toil in the fields
by the sweat of their backs
labor to survive
work brings joy, but knowledge remains
labor produces, creates, and sustains

evolution
the driving force to live among the stars
once created, now the creators
to labor is our purpose

the life of work

Jack

As a young lad growing up with a coal miner as a father, I was drawn to that particular occupation. I can remember as a 9 year old going to work with my dad inside his mine. I was told I had to start at the bottom, scoop coal, and learn as I progressed. I was never given a thing, I had to earn everything I owned, and am glad that was instilled in me that young.

As the weeks and months passed, I learned how to drive a gangway straight and level (a gangway is the main tunnel in the mine). I also learned to dig my own hitches and set my own props so as not to have a cave-in (hitches are holes chipped in the bottom rock to set your wood props in and you pound in to the top rock until it's a perfect 90 degrees). I learned to drill my holes to set the dynamite into, and properly place it so it blows the coal out correctly.

What all this means is I started out at the bottom and learned the trade. By the time I was 18 years old, I was a certified miner and foreman with blasting license. I learned what work means, or should mean to everyone. If you want something, you work for it, and save your hard earned money until you can get it. Some work is harder than others, but it's all the same concept.

Everything goes back to what my dad instilled in me as a kid. To put your all in everything you do, and to become the best at it. After being nearly killed in the mines, I took up carpentry and worked hard, and watched, and learned everything I could, until I could do everything on my own. At age 35 I started my own company and did pretty well for the next 12 years. Then my life left me, and I walked away from everything I owned and cherished. I wandered the roads and the bars. I fell hard and I started to sell my wares (pot) and I worked hard at that as well, starting at the bottom, buying a quarter pound at a clip, until I was buying fifty pounds every three weeks or so. Until April 9th 2013, when my life fell even further into the abyss. I ended up in prison!

I'm going back to my father's words, and pull my life back together when I'm released from here. Everything in life is hard work.

untitled (hurricane)

M-LAW

Sticky hot and humid
smells of decay and mold thick
air like liquid, hard to breathe
the smell of death creeps

Destruction at every turn
homes, rich and poor
businesses, large and small
all received the same treatment
nothing untouched
no discrimination just ruin
nature has no picks

mountains of garbage grow by the minute
boats, miles from water, out of place
dirty cars litter the landscape
like toys a giant child once played with
now broken and abandoned thrown into piles of shit.
Now bacteria and mold make them home.

Water lines on buildings still standing
Scars that show the battle they endured
Others just piles of sticks stacked the way a beaver would
dam a creek.
Far from where they once stood tall.

Family pet that once were,
laying where they come to rest,
bloated and smelling, food for the flies
once loved, now forgotten, to be remembered too late.
Pets still alive roam in packs,
striving to survive after overcoming incredible odds already.

Pictures, keepsakes and heirlooms,
memories of peoples lives washed away,
now half buried in mud and voting
things that can't be replaced lost never to be had again

those who didn't flee now inhabit tents
overcrowded cities made of canvas
this can't be the USA
Military on the streets and in the air
The Red Cross giving out meals from a truck
Buildings boarded up and barricaded
Signs screaming looters will be shot on site
this must be some 3rd world country

The sounds during the day are like a construction site
Hammers bang, generators drone, heavy equipment scrapes
workers shouting instruction hard at work
people selling shirts and hats saying I survived the big one

night sounds different then what's heard in most places
shouts full of anger and fear, running feet slap dirt and pavement
police sirens, loud speakers voice booming curfew in effect
gun fire cracks in the distance
gun fire explodes close followed by mens shouts
somewhere a woman screams high pitch cut off half way
generator motors constant drone

This is the office I choose to work in. This is where my spirit
thrives and my heart soars. If I'm lucky, I go every night after work
to rest in a RV or FEMA trailer. Rebuilding these places makes my
life worth living.

Work is:

M-LAW

Work is: to put energy into attaining a goal, to physically take
action, to put forth mental exertion, to improve myself, to eat
better, to exercise, to see the good in others, to trust, to give
without return, to stay positive, to live in the light, to keep focus,
to love myself, to let others love me, to find a soul mate, to start a
family, to be happy, to help others, to teach, to be a role model, to
serve, to support, to love, to build relationships, to create, to
write, to paint, to draw, to build, to invent, to make a difference,
to invest in humanity, to leave my mark on the world.

Work

A. E.

WORK HAS A MEANINGFUL DEFINITION;

THE LABEL OF YOUR WORK GIVES YOU RECOGNITION.

PEOPLE USE THEIR WORK AS A MEANS FOR MONEY.

I USE MY WORK TO SUPPORT MY HONEY.

WORK IS THE WAY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS.

WORK IS A WAY YOU CAN HAVE THE BEST.

GOD DID HIS WORK WHEN HE FORMED CREATION;

THEN HE RESTED UP FOR GLORIFICATION.

IF YOU HAVE VERY HIGH EXPECTATIONS

SEEK WITH ALL YOUR HEART GOD'S EXULTATION.

Work: Cooking Time Away

Wally

For three and a half years, serving a 5-10 year sentence, work has always been my escape from time. Importantly, serving time in prison can be extremely stressful. But when you incorporate something you love and enjoy doing into the time you are serving, time begins to burn away.

Cooking is a great passion of mine. I used my passion to make my time melt away. My favorite thing to make here in prison is Pizza. Pizza, in prison, isn't really a hard thing to make, but to the staff, it is the most in-demand specialties I made for them. In putting my own twist on them, I make homemade sauce, and create the perfect toppings.

One specialty I make is my special chicken pizza. It consists of Grilled chicken, well seasoned, fresh tomatoes, broccoli, green peppers, onions, and melted cheese (mozzarella and cheddar). Secondly is my breakfast omelettes. The staff loves my cooking.

Remembering cooking every night from 10pm - 1am in the staff cafe excites me. Seeing the faces of the guards and staff, with signs of satisfaction, eating their food I've prepared for them lets me know that I have a gift.

Working in dietary in prison is rather difficult alone. The best part of doing so is seeing the people I serve happy and enjoying the meal I prep for them. The difference in working here than a restaurant is that it is in prison. The hospitality doesn't change. Being confined also changes the perspective of what it is like to be a chef behind bars. Same concepts, different scenery.

Cooking behind bars is challenging. Personally, I love challenges. It helps build character. The fact that if you could do something you love in the worst situation, you can overcome any obstacles. It's called learning how to make the best out of your situation.

So work is a great way to use your time. Cooking is the best way to burn time away. A meal is best served, well done!

untitled

Mikal Hassan Allah

About a decade ago, me and several other men were convicted of crimes we did not commit, and were found guilty because we were Black and uneducated. We were pacing back and forth in our cells until one of us said, "I'm going to educate myself in law, and get out of here. That's the way out."

Then someone else said, "this is a stolen country with made up Laws. The system wasn't made to work for us. The only way out is through prayer and god will deliver us like he delivered Daniel."

Then someone else said, "Who told yo that! That's what they want you to believe. They want you to keep your eyes in the sky praying to that mystery God while they control the land under your feet. The only way out is to separate fantasies from reality, and physically climb that wall."

Then someone else said, "y'al are incorrect, y'all have failed to examine the predicament we are in, but by my distinguished calculation and my accurate mimmajibba, all we have to do is wait and the walls will begin to start to rot from within and crumble and fall. That's the way out."

Then someone else creamed out, "I'm gonna get out all by myself by telling on all of you fools. That is the only way out!"

"No, no, no!" they all screamed from their cells, "I have the way out!"

And to this day, they are still screaming from their cell doors in fear like that cowardly lion.

Moral of the story: It's time for collective action.

Work(?)

Hassan

This has been mentally exhausting! Why, you may ask? Well, how do you write about something that is so vast, and can't be explained in just one sentence or definition? So for me, I must take you on a journey.

This work I must do requires mental focus, if I am to get the desired result, which is to get you, the reader, or in this case, the listener, to see what work really is.

Is work one's physical or mental exertion, the effort it takes to get something accomplished? Or is it a job, an occupation, a place where one is compensated for their service whether by finances, goods, housing or the internal rewards and gratification of helping another human being? Does the compensation, or earnings dictate that it be called 'work', or is it the service rendered itself?

The idea for this writing came easily; bringing it into fruition, not so easy. See, the meaning of work is complex, for instance, is the *idea* for this piece 'work', or is it the *writing itself*? Maybe the *completion* of it, or is it *all* considered 'work'? Is the vision, idea, collection of data, the sentence structure, reorganization of sentences, changes made to the piece, all part of a whole which in the end is called 'a piece of work'? By the way, if I call you 'a piece of work', what does that mean?

Another way to examine this is to take a look at sports. Something that is so enjoyable and fun, and is sometimes played for hours at a time, if looked at from a different angle, could be considered 'work'. How many hours do we put in practicing a particular sport? We must do the same thing over and over again in order to be come proficient at it, so that when it is time for a game, it appears effortless. Natural ability only takes one so far, as it is said, "one must work on their craft". Another way to examine the sport concept is in team sports. Individual players have unique abilities and talents but a coach must be able to get them to work as a unit in order to be successful. So which is considered work, what the coach must do, or the team's willingness to perform as a cohesive group? Yet still, the coach and team must both perform their own particular function, which in the end can be viewed as a 'collective work'.

If one were to ask an artist, "what do you do for work?", is it the art produced that makes it 'work', or the occupation itself? We know the finished product is called "a work of art," what about the process it takes to produce the art, is this not 'work'?

To function at a high level on a daily basis requires one to have the ability to be extremely focused, something we take for granted, but look closer, isn't this work? If one who operates in this capacity burns out, do we not say, "they were overworked"? We could examine this further, because there are so many ways we could view work, but I will leave you with one question: Throughout this piece of writing, by the repetition of questions, have I not caused you to "work"?

7-26-16

J.R.

"Labor defines identity. Enigmatic? Yes friends, identity is riddled in a maze of choices, that define what we do, work or labor for. What do you labor for? Money, purpose, or identity? Our choices define what life expects us to become, why you labor and who you are."

"Labor is the author, the blueprint, and the structure of the human race vision."

"Work provides the experience fro big dreams giving man unique definition of expressions, building our future"

"If you work, you have faith."

"Labor is the anchor of success."

"Labor can give us all that money can buy, and everything that life can give."

"Work is the sweat and blood of humanity. Labor could be defined as the vision of the human race to provide their children a better tomorrow."

Work

Lugo

Is work up to me,
Or up to those I cannot see?

Is work a vision
within my mind, or a
coordinated dopefiend sign?

Is work democratic,
or for those who can have it?

The Evolution of Defining Work

Don Quixote

Although the word evokes generally positive thoughts, vis a vis the word sloth, it is a word heavily laden with exorbitant attributes that are acquired in life.

For example, my own perception of the word continues to evolve. As a child, i knew that my father left in the morning to go to "work" and that he returned home from that ethereal place. I realized that the majority of the day was defeated to whatever "work" entailed.

As I grew older and began schooling, I also was introduced to the world of "work" through the much-dreaded chore of home"work".

No longer mysterious or exciting in the realm of the unknown, "work" took on a negative and distasteful connotation as something imposed upon a reluctant recipient.

I felt sorry for my father.
Work sucked.

Government Names

A.E. - Arthur Evans

Adam - Mark Henderson

Check Mark - Mark Nonnemacher

Don Quixote - John Monek

Hassan - Alonzo Cooper

Jack - Richard Weikel

J.R. - Jose R. Cucurullo-Traveras

Lugo - Joseph Lugo

Malakki - Ralph Bolden

Mikal Hassan Allah - Melvin Cowart

M-LAW - Matthew Lawrence

T. Cool - Troy A. Cool

Wally - Marquise Waliyyuddin