
A Brick in My Cell

for bass voice, cello, and piano

Text by Shareaf Fleming

Music by Jake Berran

2021

Notes

This work was made for *SING OUT STRONG: Incarcerated Voices*, an initiative by White Snake Projects to pair incarcerated and formerly incarcerated writers with composers to create pieces of music. Their website says it best:

These writers are figuring out life strategies every day when they wake up in their cells; they are working to reassimilate into society; they are mothers who become “lifers” because their children are lifers; poets, philosophers, activists . . . The stories that emerge show the humanity and brilliance of those experiencing incarceration as they forge new bonds, reconcile themselves with their actions, and move beyond mere survival to redefine what it means to live life fully within the constraints of the US penal system. It is humbling, frightening, and eye-opening. It is powerful, moving, and unapologetic. It is a call to action to those of us who have never experienced incarceration to make the changes necessary to break the cycle of poverty, discrimination, devaluation of black and brown lives, and incarceration.

Incarcerated people are silenced by people in power who would like for society to view them only as a threat. We must replace this carceral system built on punitive suffering and alienation with one that focuses on the safety and well-being of all humans.

Text

A brick in my cell just grew a mouth
You wouldn't believe what tumbled out
Stories of this wretched cell,
How warriors barely made it out
Now I am locked in a box
Trying with everything I have to box with a lock
As I struggle with my homework
I kick myself in the ass "you should be at home jerk"
Now I walk the prison halls with two masks
One to hide my emotions, the other to save my ass

Shareaf Fleming

A Brick in My Cell

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Jake Berran

♩ = 66

Bass

Violoncello

Piano

p

sul pont.
tr

molto sul pont.
gliss.

n *p* *n* *n* *p* *pp*

♩ = 66

pp

ped. ad lib,
generally wet

♩ = 76

♩ = 66 *mp*

B.

brick in my cell just grew a mouth

Vc.

pizz. ord.

arco sul tasto

pp *mp*

♩ = 76

♩ = 66

Pno

pp

tr *tr* *tr*

A Brick in My Cell

8

mf *f* *mf* *p*

B. You would - n't be - lieve what tum - bled out Sto - ries

Vc. ord. *mf* *p* *gliss.* *n* *molto sul pont.* (II) (I)

Pno *mf* *p* (L.H.) *pp* *n*

11

mp *mf* *f* *mp* *f*

B. sto - ries sto - ries of this wretch - ed cell How

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *n* *sul A* *gliss.* *n* *f* *n* ugly harmonic

Pno *p* *mf* *p*

15 *p* *f* **17**

B. *war - ri - ors* *bare - ly made it out*

Vc. ord. repeat as needed *pp* *mf*

Pno *f* *pp* *mf* *pp* **17**

18 *p* *p* *mf* *f*

B. *Now I am locked in a box* *Try - ing with eve - ry - thing I have to*

Vc. sul pont. *fr* ord. *fr* *n* *p* *n* *p* *mf*

Pno *p* *mf*

23 $\text{♩} = 76$

B. box with a lock

Vc.

Pno

pp

26 *mf* *f*

B. As I strug - gle with my home - work I

Vc. *p*

Pno

p

f

28

B. *rit*.....

kick my - self in the ass You should be at

Vc. *f* *p*

Pno *f* *p* *f* *mf*

31

B. *p* *p* *p*

home, jerk Now I walk the pris - on halls

Vc. *pp* *pizz.* *p*

Pno *pp* *p*

32 ♩ = 66

35 *pp*

B. *pp*
with two masks One to hide my e - mo - tions,

Vc. *pp*
arco sul tasto

Pno *pp*

39 *p* *mf* *p*

B. *p* *mf* *p*
the oth - er to save my ass

Vc. *n* *f* *n* *mf* *n*
sul D sul pont.

Pno *p* *p*

rit.....