

You have received a **JPAY** letter, the fastest way to get mail

From: SIMON HATLEY, ID: 355370  
To: Sean Hatley, CustomerID: 19838955  
Date: 8/31/2018 9:34:13 AM EST, Letter ID: 470378858  
Location: LCF  
Housing: 84016BOTB4

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~~CREATING BACKUPS~~

A Theory of Justice

Joe won't be disturbed  
He toils for his granddaughter.  
His eyes dart from palette to  
painting, painting to palette,  
*as if a dollop of color might escape  
or a lotus not be captured.*

*Outside, a quintet of greyhounds  
saunters toward the East Yard.  
Heads bowed, the dogs skim  
their paws forward and ease them  
to the ground. They have been sprung.  
They smile in the dewy, summer morning.*

Even at this hour a guard menaces.  
His hands keep rhythm. He sizes up  
the downcourt scurry, the scrumming  
for position, and the lunging to cover.  
He gathers. He withholds.

My unit's resident bodybuilder remains  
a slumbering lump beneath his pilled,  
state-issue blanket. Later, he will strain  
against iron forged, like him, in works  
that still flow with their molten blood  
and still exhale its heavy metals.

*Where does freedom lie?  
Where have the blades dulled  
that lanced my eyes  
as I rode in to quarantine?*

*Where does freedom lie?  
Where have the war-drumming  
bikes hushed  
whose riders beeped  
and flipped off us?*

*Where does freedom lie?  
Where do grapes grow?  
Where does the sun shine lemon?  
Where is the country of nutmeg and berry,  
a land that brings forth no mashed  
potatoes, no garlic mashed  
potatoes, no cheesy  
potatoes, no baked  
potatoes, no potato  
salad, and no oven-browned  
potatoes?*

Freedom lies in the tip  
of Joe's southpaw.

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a candle flame illuminating  
a Japanese garden.

Freedom lies in the mouths awed  
upon the bolt inside, the defenders'  
groping, the quick dish underneath,  
and the easy two.

*Freedom lies in the nearly  
crisp bite of a Tater Tot.  
(It is made of Tater, after all,  
and not potato.)*

Freedom lies in the stumbling muscle  
of a sleep-loving demigod. Ramadan --  
the month of shadowless daylight,  
the month of standing up slowly,  
and the month of opening eyes --  
I saw our bodybuilder's sculpted shadow  
stagger out of bed to beckon the East  
and then to fold Eastward. Prostrate  
in the dark, he lost all definition.  
Toward the horizon, a gauze soon  
would be lifted, to reveal the sun.

Freedom lies in the shade  
of a West Yard tree, where  
a pit bull and its handler  
have fallen asleep.  
The dog has flattened  
into its grassy bed.  
It dreams of a grassy bed,  
of the scent of cool earth,  
of unconstricted air,  
and of clear water.

Freedom lies in bestowing  
your ideal upon a dog.  
The pit bull will awaken to  
its dreams. We awaken from  
ours.

-- Christopher Wood