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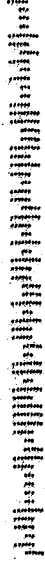
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Jody Lewen and the entire
 Prison University Project/Mt.
 Tamalpais College staff teachers,
 and friends...

4/27/2020.

Thank you for the generous gift! I have been locked up on California's death row for about thirty years now, and this is one of the few times that I have received such a nice gift... It is very much appreciated! Please feel free to share this letter and related writing on your website, or in a email message to your community. As you have sent me a gift, I shall return the favor with a gift of thought. Please enjoy my essay...

Respectfully
 Michael S. Combs

This I Believe - An Essay

I believe in a place, a home, and a moment where my family and friends are together in happiness forever... I believe in the bonds of family and the hope of place is what brings peace to my heart and positive drive to my way. I believe in preparing for the extremes while keeping all of my avenues open. I believe in truth, justice, knowledge,

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discipline, balance and the traditional martial artist. I believe in protecting and helping the innocent and those that are in need.

I believe in taking full responsibility for my own actions, as well as for those around me when I cannot help or make things right. I believe in having true consideration for others, as well as the world around me. I believe in not being the problem. I do more than try, as forever I live in the moment of the here and now.

Faintly I think back as I express my beliefs to you. A slight summer breeze always seems to awaken during these thoughts. I am from the mountains within Colorado... I embrace the memories of the rhythmic swaying of the grass, hay and wild flowers upon the meadows of home. The times of my youth with my mom, dad, sisters, and my aunt and uncle I embrace most.

I am forever drawn to the meadows of home and far up into those hidden alpine places in the Colorado mountains. I have special memories of the Aspen Ridge wilderness as they arise upon my heart and soul.

I would await hours within the

(2.)



aspen groves just sitting, listening, and enjoying the place and the world. The aspen ridge became my secret as it is hidden from the outside world.

Dark alpine trees seem to surround the forest of aspen with their beige and white trunks. Each aspen tree has its own story as all of the tree trunks hold their own scars, notches and knots that mark the twists and turns of time.

A slight breeze travels up the ridge through thousands of tree tops, to cause billions of aspen leaves to truly sing.

Eternity speaks through the rustle and hum of their song, just like the ebb and flow of willows and wild mountain flowers next to an alpine creek. The redolent wisp of aspens, willows, sage, wild flowers, and mountain grass truly influence the heights of the day.

I experience the change upon the land as autumn arrives, while each morning holds its own expressions of frost. A different feel awakens in the forest, which brings the essence and passage of change. The aspen groves explode with a multitude of bright colors -- variations of gold, orange and red spread through the trees in bright waves of color as shades of green become

a pleasant background. An ongoing advance of shadow and color give purpose to the countryside. Swiftly the reckoning and strength of the moment holds my heart in stillness as fall is here and very much alive... Elk bugle and deer spar, while beaver attend to their lodges. Squirrels check their stores as strings of geese fly south. Movement and change spread upon the land.

Then one day all life becomes silent as a steady but chilly breeze awakens... The aspen leaves begin to flutter as they slowly fall to the forest floor. There is a chorus of billions of falling leaves that end up rolling and tumbling across the land. A softly walking leaf becomes the aspen's song as gray clouds fill the ever-lasting sky of hope.

The fall colors have departed now as the meadows, fields, and valleys have turned brown. A last hope and a sigh of a whisper upon life when the bare withered tree branches moan and creak within the breeze of time. There is a silence to the mountains now as snowflakes slowly fall from gray clouds... The reckoning of winter is here. The temperature drops and water slows to a stop, as the white of winter has its own time.

The durability and true eloquence of hidden forest tracks stand like shadows of wild mountain flowers past. Clear is the wisdom upon the endless breeze of time. A dreaming memory to the meadows of home and the aspen ridge forest in the fall twilight... Forever comfortable is the twilight. Forever comfortable is the memory. Forever is the moment. Forever the importance of what we all believe in stands. Peace and love on Earth...

Sincerely Forever
Michael S. Combs ☺

P.S.

I have note books of this kind of writing, and like minded poems with no true outlet... Please feel free to write:

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