

Remembering those we have lost

Dec. 21 is National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, marked across the country by people who have lost loved ones to homelessness.

This year, Street Roots lost several of our vendors, many of them homeless, and all of them far too soon. We miss them all dearly. Across Multnomah County, 79 people died homeless, literally, on our streets in 2017. Many more have left us as a result of the long-term trauma caused by living without a home for months, years and even decades.

During recent sessions of our Street Roots' Writer's Circle, vendors paused to compile original work to reflect on the people they loved and lost. Here are their writings.

Before

by Bronwyn "Banshee" Carter

Before me
There were others

time pain elements
countless faces, worn leathered

Before me
names of those remembered
some now forgotten

loved ones left haunted
"Could I have done more, tried harder?"

Before me
many feet took many steps
over pavement miles

concrete behemoths echoed stories
of triumphs gained, struggles shared
heads nodded in agreement

Before me
in the City of Roses
the thorns laid down to slumber
our numbers grew more, not less
years passed and time it seems,
changed nothing

Before me and after me
There will always be others

Life Lost

by Scott Mattson

The year is 2018. That means I've seen street life for 34 years.

I've met too many people to count or name anymore.

But, unfortunately, that means I've lost a lot of friends or acquaintances too.

Looking back, there have been some really special people I've lost.

When you don't have a home to lock yourself away from life and people, you tend to spend more time with people and learn more "intimate" details about them, as well as them about you.

Sometimes, the bond can even be stronger than the bond you have with your own family.

Embrace everyone you meet. There is a reason for every interaction you have with them.

Life is too short and you never know when someone may leave you.

Make the most of everyone, cherish all memories you have, good or bad it is what your life is. That's all you will have when they are gone.

Untitled

by Daniel Cox

Genocide and tales form a conquered people.

Silent hunger and suffering.

A great and noble savage put to rest.

With his ancestors his bones are

Ceremonially put in a grave.

To be remembered no more.

