



Photo by Matt Love

Oregon Youth Authority North Coast Correctional Facility in Warrenton houses a continually rotating population of up to 50 young inmates between the ages of 14 and 21.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

An occasional feature by MATT LOVE

North Coast Correctional Facility

I sat in the back of the room and waited for the poetry slam to begin at the Oregon Youth Authority North Coast Correctional Facility in Warrenton. Ten boys from the Klaskanine unit volunteered to perform their works in front of peers and staff in a judged competition. I had been invited by the principal of the facility's high school, South Jetty, and having staged many poetry slams in my teaching career, instantly agreed.

A spoken word performer named Madgesdiq, (real name Antoine Stoudamire), from Portland hosted the event and warmed up the room with a hypnotic piece called "Time." Just moments before the show started, he told me he works with youth to, "help them understand the power of writing and the inspiration to heal." That about sums up my entire teaching philosophy, and I felt that in meeting Madgesdiq I'd met a brother in writing.

The slam unfolded. I jotted down some lines:

- I'm drowning in shallow water, as shallow as it comes.
- Set me free from the crystal curse.
- I remember those nights with no purpose.
- I want a rose to grow from the concrete.
- I lay in the devil's playground, but I don't play.
- Black babies turn to black holes.
- My life is a picture, but not big enough to paint.
- I never learn from mistakes; it's why my life isn't a piece of cake.

The students' English teacher even got up and threw it down hard, a powerful woman's blunt call for respect from men, including the young men sitting in a circle right in front of her. They listened. Heads nodded. I was watching what poetry had become for these incarcerated young men and what it should be for all high school English students but so rarely is. Why is that?

The slam concluded. Two boys tied, and they went back up and spontaneously rified to decide the title. One scored higher, but both were declared winners and won a new pair of Nikes.

I had to leave, but not before I wrote these lines:

*I thought I'd see posturing,
I didn't see a pose.
I thought I'd hear clichés fire and roar
I heard nothing but original metaphors.*

Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon and teaches at Astoria High School. His books are available through bookstores or nestuccaspitpress.com

COLUMBIA BAR

Hangover Cure

By RYAN HUME

If you ended last year right (or very, very wrong), chances are you started the new one with a less-than-stellar attitude, a vampire-like sensitivity to light and a queasy noxious feeling spilling from every pore. This is no way to stick to your resolutions.

Of course, the best way to avoid a hangover is to skip overindulging in the first place. And as for a cure? Well, really, the jury is still out on that one, but who better to ask for a recommendation than the bar manager of a restaurant that serves brunch? (Oh, brunch: that slow, casual crawl back toward civility after a night out.)

Matt Lessnau, of the Pickled Fish in Long Beach, Washington, skipped over two popular notions of hangover treatment — the hair of the dog and exercise — but combined two others — the greasy breakfast and the fizzy drink — to come up with a recipe for hangover

relief that sounds both satisfying and maybe even a little restorative.

It should be noted that Angostura bitters, while easy to digest, contain a scant amount of alcohol, and, of course, the healing properties of sausage gravy are already well known throughout the land.

What you'll need:

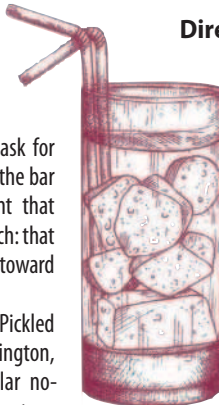
- A big pile of biscuits and gravy*
- 4-5 dashes of Angostura cocktail bitters
- Soda water
- Ice

Directions:

Add bitters to soda water and ice. Stir, and enjoy with your biscuits and gravy.

—Recipe courtesy of Matt Lessnau, bar manager, Pickled Fish, Long Beach, Washington

*Pickled Fish does a unique spin on the standard biscuit and gravy by spiking their gravy with fennel sausage and harissa, which is a garlicky North African chile paste.



Submitted image

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