

### "A Room Cell with a View"

The struggle lives. Well folks, Church has left the building! The building known as [former prison] that is. Your forlorn protagonist now hangs his hat at [new prison]. For me to be excited about going from one prison to another is indeed an anomaly, but I gotta tell you folks, I'm feeling kinda good. Why? Because my new cell has a window, and the window opens and closes! There are no broken window panes! My new cell has heat!! I'm told when it gets cold, the heating pipe can heat water for a piping hot cup of coffee!

After languishing in those caves at [former prison] for the last 7-8 years, I feel rejuvenated! As I sit writing, I'm being buffeted by soft gentle breezes. To stand at the window and look beyond the razor-wired fences and see in the distance trees poking their heads about the rooftops is...cathartic.

I look out the window and see lush green grass manicured to precision. I see clusters of flowers in a brilliant array of yellows, pinks, and reds, purples, and oranges. I think back to all the time my gal used to spend in the backyard, perfecting her "cottage garden." She created beauty that was right there before my eyes, but I didn't see it. I see it now.

Then there are the birds. Some guys throw bread out the window. Birds rush to get a morsel only to be shooed away by pigeons, who in turn, shoo away other pigeons. Apparently they don't like apples, because one bird has been attacking an apple more than half an hour, shooing away other birds trying to get a beak-full of the sweet apple meat. Only the strong survive, eh?

Many years ago someone encouraged me to take in as much fresh air and sunshine that I could, saying it would do wonders for my soul and spirit. I didn't believe it back then, but over the years I found that to be true. Today I feel like new life has been breathed into me. It may not last. Chances are someone - guard or inmate - will ruin it for me, but for now I'm going to savor every minute. To be continued. The struggle lives. Peace/blessings.

CHURCH

Pennsylvania

# Thank You FOR READING!

Below are some questions to reflect on from this piece. Feel free to also use one as a conversation starter with a fellow reader, or even a loved one on the outside!

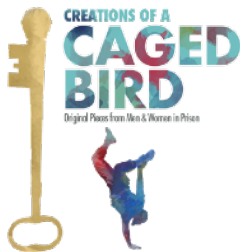
***Church writes that in the past, he often failed to see the beauty of the outdoors "that was right there before my eyes." Have you had the same experience?***

***Where and when might you be able to open your eyes to the simple beauties of the natural world now? How might slowing down and noticing these things help you live with more zest?***

We'd love to hear what you thought of the piece, or if you've had any meaningful conversations as a result. Or perhaps you'd like to share an expression of your own (visual art or creative writing). You are always welcome to write to us at Shining Light at P.O. Box 267, Annville, PA 17003.

*\*Note: We will not be able to provide a response to your letter or receipt of your submission, but know that we value your feedback and contributions and will take them seriously.*

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