

Blessings for a Prisoner, by John Donohue

Caged in a cold, functional cell,
Far from the comfort of home,
With none of your own things,
In a place that is gray and grim,
Where sounds are seldom gentile,
Amidst the shuffled of dumber feet,
The crosswords of lost voices,
The one constant note,
Is the dead, trap shut sound
Of unrelenting doors that
Make walls absolute.

Thought you may have lost the outside world,
May you discover the untold journey
That awaits you in the inner world.

May you come to recognize,
That though your body is imprisoned,
No one can imprison your mind.

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May all the time you have on your hands
Bring you into a new friendship with your mind
So that you learn to understand and integrate
The darkness that brought you here.

Within this limited space,
May you learn to harness
The stretch of time.

May your compassion awaken.
May you learn to recover the self
You were before you lost your way
And draw from its depths
Some balm to heal your wounds.

Behind the harsh rhythms of prison life,
May you find a friend you can talk to
And nurture the natural kindness
To become more free in your heart
And lighten the out constraints.

May your eyes look up and find
The bright live of an inner horizon
That will ground and encourage you
For that distant day when your new feet
Will step out onto the pastures of freedom.