

## Wills' Epitaph

Arrested during the new growth, taken to trial in summer, then sentenced as the leaves fell; the facade cracked. The punishment will kill, but only in a slower, less deliberate manner than the needle the crime could never evoke.

The first year, churning thoughts produce a mantra he returns to daily. "Somehow, someday, I will get out of prison. Somehow, someday I will Get OUT OF PRISON. SOMEHOWSOMEDAYIWILLGETOUTOFPRISON." As juxtapositioned days domino into the abyss, the relentless grinding of Father Time's clockworks turn this expectation into unclenchable dust. With the rest of life arranged and a number to replace a name, the crack begins to crevice.

Before the peep of birds and while the rest of the world sleeps, a 2:50 wake up call screams life into weary bones. He attempts to out meditate ruthless thoughts before breakfast, but the joys of the past are as oppressive as the sorrow for his future. As paper smothers rock, hereafters present script, manifested by a single page of daily humdrum, closes around earlier and better times. The winner never changing, just as in the childish game of chance.

With the tray put away, the painful realization that his meaningless life has been nourished, for another day, weighs as heavily on the mind as the morning meals fodder does on the stomach. The next couple of hours, before dawn, are consumed by an attempt to drum up sympathy for the victim of a long ago crime. Fuzzy today, as it was during its spur-of-the-moment occurrence, the mind chases a memory, never settling on its fleetfooted prey. Absence also makes the heart grow harder, but a faint echo of remorse can always be heard from, deep in Compassions Vessel, now drained of the preceding years tears. Effectuated by eons, the crevice is now a canyon.

Seconds tick by aching slow, till a three hour wait for the job assignment ends with an order. "Field Force. Turn Out." brings him screaming into the present. The cell door clangs open and he steps into reality.

Texas panhandle winds blow sand and dust onto his vacant face as an 'aggie' is placed into calloused hands. Will the weed choked raddish patch be labors invitation or shall an otherwise empty rock infused field be on the receiving end of the dull garden hoe. Thank fully the oversized implement swings only for five hours. Now is the time to strip off all articles of clothing, along with any remaining dignity, in order to naked dance. Before re-entering the gates, for the noon meal, a scene reminiscent of some long ago aboriginal ceremony occurs. Dozens of men lift their testicles, open their mouths wide, run grimy fingers through their hair, then finally finish this foolish looking fandango with a quick spin, butt-cheek spread and squat-N-cough.

The recreation yard opens. A vicious and grasping constitution, marinated with habit causes him to exercise. Push-ups, pull-ups, squats and run. Nullifying a quicker appointment with death, these health sustaining exertions forever distance the body from a declining soul. All a mindless charade for a life left unlived.

In the shower, a body built to last decades more is comforted by the power of water. No longer needed for its procreative value, his useless appendage stares dejectedly at water worn tiles. The towel for drying also soaks up that which falls from his eyes. Only during this time can he camouflage that which shows weakness.

The cognitive courses he attends cause him to bleed fallacies of expectation. The only meaningful choices are to jump or not and to eat or not. Skipping the last meal allows hunger pains which give a satisfactory glance into the consequence of starvation. Torture of this sort awakens feelings while giving clarity to his surroundings. The third floor railing whispers its temptuous musings. Leaning over the edge of the abyss, his essence leaps toward the luxuriously jagged fantasies reaching from the bottom of the canyon.

Going to bed hungry casts shadows upon the mind and waning principles are devoured by the darkness. Thoughts of family and friends, who no longer visit or correspond, slide up-n-down grey matters ridges, grappling at its slippery bulwarks. Fear of waking to another oppressive day

Creeps in as sleep draws near. Prayers go out for those who are suffering, but for himself, he intones a life ending ailment to strike as he sleeps.

Entombed in this Mausoleum of steel, concrete and locked doors, the body sheds its determination to live. Self preservation is consumed by the fires of mans Justice. Yet out of the ashes a principle rises. A principle not unlike the Cockroach and rat, of which are untouched by man made disasters or the plagues of destiny. A principle that like these two hated creatures also spawns as fruitfully in the cracks and crevices as it does in the brightness of light. At an aching slow pace, this principle widens and deepens the gorge, transcribing an otherwise empty landscape. The principle is HOPE.

Here lies the Will  
once upon the livings head  
A rendezvous with razor wire  
cuts through its time worn thread  
Peace, joy and happiness  
severed by institution  
Hope and Breath struggle on  
in one mans restitution

May the Will rest in Peace.

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