

## **COLD DAYS IN PURGATORY**

**BY**

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The divergent distractions that exists inside a prison compound are often enough to hoard away feelings of hopelessness and despair. Nothing though is cogent enough to overcome the morose feelings to which every prisoner eventually succumbs.

As hard as one may try; loneliness, despair, insufficiency, and shame supercede all other emotions regardless of efforts to the contrary.

Just as on the outside, the weather dictates emotions. When cold, wintry, days of rain, sleet and even snow arrive; a fierce, biting wind invades the wide open landscape exacerbating an environment void of trees and man-made partitions.

The cold and wind reinforce the helplessness of one's existence. Men who usually stroll across the grounds while talking with others instead walk briskly with heads lowered to avoid the elements and any potential interaction with others.

On these days a strange quiet overtakes the otherwise clamorous sounds of conversation, laughter, and even dominoes being slapped into play on metal tables. This calm is not tranquility though. It is a state of inner reflection that brings back into focus the many losses one suffers while in prison.

Thoughts of mistakes, missed opportunities and the longing for loved ones muddle the mind. One reads, meditates, sleeps and prays in hope of obtaining a reprieve that usually arrives later than sooner.

Time, the omnipresent and omnipotent enemy of the prisoner, graciously offers eventual albeit temporary solace from these periods of sullenness. For permanent relief is not possible during one's incarceration or even thereafter.

One hopes that opportunities to mitigate past harm done to others will present themselves. For even the remorseful prisoner though the cycle of regret and loss never truly ceases, thereby making restitution in one's own heart and mind forever unobtainable.