

# The Indiana State Recidivist Conditioning Center by Danny Cherry <sup>P.1</sup>

I had been cast into the Dark Age where all that was missing was a fagot upon which to burn my faggot ass to a crisp for the sheer pleasure of the lower primates. I was a damn fool for ever even having thought that tyrannical philistines would permit a replica of priceless elegance into their abyss. I never truly believed that anyone from the Indianapolis Central Public Library's research department would actually oblige me by sending a copy of Frida Kahlo's painting—Self-Portrait Woman with Cropped Hair; I guess I was wrong. My heart yearned to see my Mexican sister's shed of stereotypical femininity in Technicolor—I could not be comforted. My cruel oppressors had wounded me deeply; They had penetrated my thick skin. I was besieged—shrouded in darkness—recidivism was becoming me; I was being erased. Something inside me was compelled to turn on the television—then suddenly—I was quickened by images of feminists who all were throwing their bras into the fire of a burning barrel. I leapt to my feet and cried out, "Burn Those Goddamn Bras Bitches!" My sisters had saved me.

Over three weeks had passed, since I had sent



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my two essays to my case worker—Solomon—for copying.

I had decided to send out duplicates to my loved ones for the holidays. I was such a Pollyanna—so fey, so otherworldly, so whimsical—that I could not perceive all the institutional corruption. Everyone working in Indiana State Reformatory was being discourteous and intractable as if it was my fault that Solomon did not have enough professional integrity to leave my essays with her colleagues before she went on vacation. Case worker Rooks popped up early one morning in front of my cell while I was practicing Chinese Calligraphy.

“You asked to see me? If it's not important——”

“Stop! That was one week ago—you never came. I'm over it now.”

“What did you need?”

“Inform Solomon that I no longer require copies, nor do I desire the return of my originals; she may discard them!”

“You're just a victim of circumstance!”

“I beg to differ. Perhaps destroying my writings will provide relief from the envy that is rotting bones in this cesspool. I am unstoppable!”

“Why is that?”



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"Because I don't create art; I am the arts."

Case Worker Rooks departed.

I switched on Pendleton's informational channel only to see that the Facility was having another futile athletic competition. The Outside the Lines Prison Ministry Group was coordinating a three on three basketball tournament. I became sick with pity for all the poor idiots imprisoned inside Indiana State Reformatory; They were lambs being led to the slaughter. Football was still going on simultaneous with basketball, but drew near its end. Prior to football the facility had a strong man competition and preceding that was softball. Ahead of softball were horseshoes and corn-hole competitions which Pendleton began advertising just about the time the facility's billiards and cards—spades—tournaments were ending. Vain athleticism was ubiquitous in Indiana State Reformatory; Education was almost nonexistent.