

Do you know what it's like to lose all control? Control of yourself in every way; what you eat, what you watch, what you wear, where you sleep. When you go outside, to feel sunlight on your skin, and after only an hour are forced to go back in. Back into this hell made of concrete and steel where you aren't allowed to think and your discouraged to feel. Where the strong survive and the meek fall apart. Where it's considered a weakness to have love in your heart. Have you been beaten or stabbed for the shade of your skin? Does your quality of life depend on what state you're in? 15 miles in one direction gives you 30 years of progression. Inside North Carolina lines there's only aggression and oppression. Anger is the only thing that we're fed, backwards the only direction we're led. Do you know what it's like to be treated less than a man? To be jumped or locked up for making a stand. Have you been locked up for defending yourself when you can't depend on help from anyone else? Do you know what it's like to be all alone, with the worst of the worst 7 hours from home, surrounded by murderers, drug dealers, and rapists; for so long that you've forgotten your family's faces? Do you know how it feels to go years at a time without seeing your family? Not a single visit, no hugs, no kisses. Do you know what it's like to be robbed because you won't join a gang, or to be passed over for a job because you don't gangbang? You see it's not just the inmates it's the COs too, that treat you differently for being uniquely you. Do you know what it's like to not recognize yourself when you look in the mirror? To lose 50 lbs in less than a year? Do you know how it feels to fear for your life, to not be able to shower if you don't have a knife? Do you know how it feels to have a whole can of pepper spray on your face when all you were doing was making sure a friend was safe? Do you know how it feels to lose it all? Your freedom, your family, your lover, your job, your education, your boy, your peace, and your mind? I DO. - *Ed Smith*

Submission

Throughout our lives there're days that make us
and days when we don't want to wake up
There're trials and tribulations that try to break us
So we roll with the punches and somehow stay up
Every man has his crucible and his crucifix
For every problem we're faced with there's an answer that fits
we're tempered and hardened to withstand our burdens
Form fits function, we're shaped for our purpose
whatever troubles you're facing just know that you'll make it
whatever pain you're in just know you can take it
Inside every human is the potential for greatness...

DJ

Acute