

Prison is a Place

Origin Unknown, Circulated at Danbury Prison in 1969

Prison is a place where the first prisoner you see looks like an All-American college boy and you are surprised. Later you are disgusted because people on the outside still have the same prejudices about prisoners that you used to have.

Prison is a place where you write letters and can't think of anything to say. Where you gradually write fewer and fewer letters and finally stop writing altogether.

Prison is a place where hope springs eternal; where each parole board appearance means a chance to get out, even if the odds are hopelessly against you.

Prison is a place where you find gray hairs in your head, or where you find your hair starting to disappear. It's a place where you get false teeth, stronger glasses and aches and pains you never felt before. It's a place where you grow old and worry about it.

Prison is a place where you hate with clenched teeth, where you want to beat, kick and scratch and you wonder if the psychologists know what they're talking about when they say you actually hate yourself.

Prison is a place where you learn that nobody needs you, that the outside world goes on without you.

Prison is a place where you can go for years without feeling the touch of a human hand, where you can go for months without hearing a kind word. It is a place where your friendships are shallow and you know it.

Prison is a place where you hear about a friend's divorce, and you didn't even know he was married. It is a place where you hear about your neighbour's kids graduating from school and you thought they hadn't started yet.

Prison is a place where you feel sorry for yourself. Then you get disgusted with yourself for feeling sorry for yourself; then you get mad for feeling disgusted and then try to mentally change the subject.

Prison is a place where you lose your respect for the law because you see it raw and naked, twisted and bent, and ignored and blown out of proportion to suit the people who enforce it.

Prison is a place where you're smarter than the parole board because you know which guys will go straight and which ones won't. You're wrong just as often as the board members are, but you never admit it and neither do they.