



FIRST TIME IN PRISON

I wake up in a cell. I am on the top of the three-stacked bunk. My cell-sharers and the dwellers of other cells are speaking Ghetto there. Am I in hell? I wonder. All of the others take note of me and plot in hope of gain. I've never been to prison before, is not something I say--it emanates through my humanity. They plot harder. When I look around I see they are crawling within the shadows, their eyes big and wanting, their stomachs as empty as their hearts. Their mother's jewelry, TV, toaster, even food stamps ... all gone, smoked up in pipes or shot through needles. Now, tobacco is their new crack. Homosexuality their new hidden norm; Christianity their cover. I want to laugh, but shouldn't.

Society has done this.

The government, created to serve, to protect: has caused it. These surroundings they wish to hide. Where, without drums, they beat on walls, desks, phones, and anything in reach. Mixing in droning, mind-numbing, unrhymed monologues of broken promises and delusional dreams. Lamborghinis, Ferraris, and one-hundred inch rims; seven hundred foot boats that they can't drive, can't swim, can't even fathom; gold teeth and glowing yellow "kicks". Such dreams, such ambition. Yet, they need to bum a cup of coffee from me, or, at least try. Everyone a music star, but nobody that reads. They can barely add, could never count the money of their covetous dreams. Screaming brotherhood as they bleed each other dry. I have to save myself, I can save no one else. From what I see, I wouldn't want to if I could. Most are where they should be, in here, away from my kids and regular people like me.

