

TO LIVE AND BREATHE

By Timothy J. Muise

Will I ever live and breathe again? Some days I truly doubt; and I am no skeptic! It just that some days the walls seem higher and the razor wire sharper. It's really the foolishness of the modern gulag that is getting to me, but it manifests in many ways. Some very ugly.

I remember the sea and the soft skin of a woman, but on these days the memories are foggy and hard to navigate. Those life pleasures seem so far off – small in my rearview mirror. This is my struggle for me to survive alone.

Do children still laugh? Do Bluefin tuna still gather at Middle Bank? Does the world know that I want back in? Questions such as these plague me on these days of woe. The cell door slams louder and the chow hall seems extra crowded. The universe does not vibrate and hum with energy. In fact it seems sluggish as if encased in grease or sludge.

The winds of change are replaced with a gale of foul odor. The warmth of the sun is supplanted by a cold shoulder and a dismissing glance. My step is slow and unsteady on the path to what seems to be nowhere. Prison paralysis is my disease and the cure seems unachievable.

Strength is built in these days. Endurance is instilled and raw power harnessed by a heart whose beat has slowed, but awakens. The beast in me, the warrior of real change, stretches and flexes. I ready for the battle and my senses hone. They cannot defeat me as I am iron, I am steel, I am hard as diamond.

An orange sun appears on my horizon. The walls are shorter and wire duller. My step quickens with the excitement of the future. There is nothing I cannot achieve and no foe that I fear. At last, I can live and breathe.