

## PRISON HOUSE

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Hot cells, plastic mats on metal bunks of rust  
that stain all with touch and permanence.  
Long days and longer nights lost in the hell

that encases each in its grip. Spouse and children  
left to fend for their own. The bricks. The stink  
of other humans' half-hearted efforts.

Each holding desperately to the photo of a sweetheart  
or child at home. Each reality falling away, another life  
to be thrown out into the mix. Against hunger

you grasp to the hope that is left in your heart,  
and listen to those who flame its fire. It's your life,  
whatever "life" suddenly means. One prisoner dead, strangled

with his own bed sheet; another with some random cord  
of lamp not his own; some prisoners gang raped, the act  
right in the face of guards and prison "SWAT"

clad in affiliated red marked "RRT", Rapid Response Team,  
present to collect up any stray cardboard, extra salt, or  
pillows. It is another world all to its own,

without love, understanding, or care. Societal strangers  
to judge solely by locale. The cells never safe,  
the riots and fights that never end. Here is an end to life

to be lived as unlived dreams, forgotten -- as failure's must.