

WHAT'S LEFT UNSAID

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There's alot left unsaid when my folks visit me in prison: because my selfishness has limits; because they're in here with me; because it wouldn't be fair.

Still. When they visit me, stuck in our bubble without phone, internet, or TV to interrupt, they say they want to know. I don't WANT to lie to them, so much merely goes unspoken.

Stories about Thrax (aka K2 or Spice, sythetic marijuana) overdoses intrigue them. So, I share about my stint in the Hole and how it felt like I lived in a crackhouse. I entertain them with tales of my fellow inmates' reactions to the drugs, ~~how some~~ ~~get stuck in cage like statues for hours on end, or how they~~

I tell them about Gremlin getting stuck like a statue in front of the mirror; about Troubles staggering around the deck like a zombie; about Ray-G arguing with an empty chair he thought was a dead relative; about Rock pissing his pants; about Fast crying for his mommy; and how the next morning they remember none of it, except the high; and it all starts over again. They laugh, but I know it's not real.

I don't mention my celly, Jarhead, having an episode (bad trip) and how he threatened me, then ripped off all his clothes down to his boxers, ran into the Dayroom (shared living area), and swung on anyone who approached him. I don't tell them that Tac (Tactical Swat Team) is called and he is ~~proceeded to be~~ maced, beaten, and dragged to the Hole unconscious. I spare them the news that he over-dosed later that year. The officers found him alone in his cell, stiff to the touch. The inmate janitors tasked with moving him outside ~~to the floor of the building~~ to be picked up by the coroner's van like yesterday's garbage.

I do brag to them about my grade in my junior college class; about my new job picking up trash outside; about winning the prison soccer tournament. I share the details from my new jailhouse Mole recipe, made with hot chilli, peanut butter, and chocolate. I mention the new Telemundo cable channel which will allow me to keep up with their novellas and give us another safe topic to talk about.

I ~~will~~ ^{don't} mention Lefty, my new hospice patient, and how his

cancer spread like wildfire, ravaging him until he was a shell of his former self. How I carried him to the toilet, pulled down his Depends underwear and tucked his dick into the plastic bedpan ten times a day. How he kept his eyes closed, maybe for himself, maybe for me. How he thought I was the doctor once and begged me to kill him and how, in that moment, seeing the raw pain in his eyes, I wished I had it in me to do it. How he died to no fanfare and how while packing up his things I didn't find one family photo or letter and how that seemed to hurt me more than his death itself.

I do rave about a transgender named Strawberry who stood up for herself over some b.s. about the phone, but not really about the phone. How she threw those hands (what we call fighting) until she had them hiding under tables. How it was all anyone could talk about for days. And how now she carries herself a little taller with a street cred no money can buy.

I wish I could complain to them about the food, the mold, the mice, the roaches, the flies, the smell, the noise--my God, the noise, like living on an airport runway. I want to tell them my appeal was denied which means they would have to live to be a 106 to see me outside these walls, but who would that help?

so

So we keep things at the waterline, the tip of the iceberg, avoiding the dark depths. Everything is fine. Everyone is fine. At the end of the visit, we'll hug, tears in my mother's eyes, and tell each other we love each other and see each other soon. We'll smile big as we wave goodbye at the sliding steel doors.
