

# Sounds Like Justice

*James Davis III*

the clicking, clanking, crashing  
of metal doors reverberates  
through your soul  
click, clank, crash  
keeping you off kilter  
so that you are in a constant space  
of imbalance resulting in an impatience  
filled with self-hatred and self-pity.

the sounds, the non-stop sounds  
of an institution of unliving  
grates against the reality that is  
life – outside – the – walls  
glimpsed through barbed wire  
where the unforgiven are sentenced  
to a sad, hate-filled state of unliving  
as if unliving is a state only they visit.

where the drab greys  
play like mournful tunes  
the emotions of the entombed  
in the quieted violence  
of imaginary prison riots  
that hypothetically kill the spirit

in the library with monotony  
while most don't have a clue.

each dawn is a renewal  
of the misery of yesterday  
which is the fraternal twin of tomorrow  
whose sad notes never fade from consciousness  
even as consciousness fades like sad notes  
because tomorrow, though unborn  
is the fraternal twin of yesterday  
whose miseries will be renewed at dawn.

sorrow is the chorus sung  
by the captive choir that forever sings  
of the desire to wake to natural sounds  
(the wind howling, birds chirping)  
which are drowned by radio chatter  
and the screech of key fighting key  
because locks are opened  
at the press of a button.

so grown women and men  
exist on bunk beds  
in cramped spaces with alien smells  
and closed cases  
only semi-conscious of their existence

because suspicions run wild  
faces hardly smile  
and each minute tastes like bile.

the eternal background music  
is the discordant tunes  
of being in a suspended state  
where sanity is constantly assaulted  
kindness is defaulted  
and tears are insulting  
as humanity runs away down the drain  
as it is drained by each moment of wakefulness.

each moment of wakefulness  
bears witness to the corruption of power  
demonstrated by the unprofessional professionalism  
where rules change like old memories  
and strings are pulled at the whim of fools  
who know not what they do  
even as the next fool  
can't wait to do it too.

the tick of the clock  
is an insistent reminder of loss  
pain the staple of every prison diet  
so pain is swallowed like brackish water

because brackish water is all there is  
so you learn to make do  
with the pain that is all day  
and loud too.

and the you that you are deep inside hurts  
hurts from being fettered and forced  
to endure an absence of treatment  
that no human being should have to endure  
incessantly searching for the cure  
for the callous indifference  
that is intrinsic to the treatment of prisoners  
and captured in sound.