

## Through the Glass

Were you proud the first time you saw me through the glass?  
I was pink in the face and robed in white cloth with blue lining.  
It was late at night on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March in 1984,  
the nursery at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach bustling with energy.  
I was there, but like a reformatted computer, I can't remember anything.  
Like how you most likely pointed at me and said, "Ese es mi hijo!"  
Except that, you were terrified to be a father at 21,  
because you didn't know how.

Years later, tons of sports trophies and straight A's done to get your approval  
and yet I have no memories of sitting on your lap,  
hearing the three words all children long for.  
Or seeing you overjoyed at my baseball games  
like the way you recalled watching Joe Morgan and Pete Rose,  
face lighting up like a scoreboard.

I wonder if you were proud  
seeing me for the second time through the glass.  
From the outside you said the place looked like Alcatraz,  
nothing but razor wire fences and tiny window slits surrounded by concrete.  
Inside, the walls were a filthy sea green, glittered by graffiti  
contrasting my gaunt and pale figure in an orange county jail uniform.  
The old beige phones that connected our voices  
didn't work sometimes, causing us to move to another booth.  
There were scratches in the glass and it was blurry in spots.  
Or was it just my eyes, teary and unable to focus?  
Maybe those tears are what highlighted the wrinkles on your young face.  
Your beard, uncharacteristically unkempt, echoed sadness.

We get to hug during visits these days.  
Your hands firm and rough like a retired carpenter's should be



wearing one of my old shirts every now and then.

They look good on you as you eat your Charbroiled 18 Wheeler sandwich complemented by The Whole Shabang chips and some of my Dr. Pepper.

We walk back and forth on the grass talking about everything and nothing, taking in the sun's rays as they reflect off the razor wire's sharp edges.

You leave as close to the 3pm limit as possible, would stay if you could.

You tell me you love me and we're no longer separated by glass, just years, and I never again need to wonder if you're proud of me.

(392 words)

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