

## Nights in Potosi

"What lived in them most completely...  
was the country that shaped them. It never left them,  
a truth soaked up as they grew into men."

—from a wonderful book I  
can't seem to find again

I sat and listened  
About their time spent in Potosi.  
How an endless fog  
Hung about—even  
On the brightest of day.

Where they hold the men of death row,  
Where they were once executed.  
Until the guards argued  
It was too traumatic for themselves.  
You would think these dead men are segregated.

My friends recounted names of men they'd known,  
Lived with. Troy fondly noted how one signed a copy of  
His book "Execution Protocol" the week before his death.

Those nights when the lights dimmed low,  
Brought goose flesh in recollection.

Quietly listening  
As these two friends  
Who've stalked other men  
Knife in hand and found their mark,  
I give thanks to have missed out  
On nights in Potosi.

The offer of my worst memory,  
Having sat and listened

For hours to another man  
Being raped while no help came,

Earns a nod.

Two days later, a letter arrives  
Out of the endless fog.  
After another prison shuffle.  
Josh expounds the beauty of the hills.  
The sound of birds calling and singing.  
The rock he threw over the kill fence  
Hitting a tree line so dense  
It looked like endless shade.  
Pure thankfulness for the sights and sounds  
He's been 20 years without.