

Sliding Windows

by Foster Trecost

Cramped space gave little room for movement, but little was needed. Alone he waited in dimness, studied smooth wooden walls and traced their polished patterns. He took a long draw of bourbon from a pewter flask.

It seemed not long ago when he was amongst those he awaited, but it had been a long, tiresome time since. He wondered how the passage of time should be measured--years seemed too short an interval, and allowed the number to climb higher than he would have liked, but it was years he used and many had passed. He wondered if they had been wasted, but was yet to decide.

He thought of leaving, but feared life as a paroled prisoner, one who spent many years in jail, and the thoughts never lasted long. He would stay and ask the unanswered questions, wonder if the answers still mattered, or if they ever did.

In younger years women had come, many intrigued by his position, many searching a divine benefit from an offering of a different nature, but there had been but one affair. It was a week of weakness he later termed a lapse in judgment, a phrase that gave haven from humiliation.

It was then he befriended the flask, attempting escape in a different way, yet learning mental abandonment was too easily hampered by reality. He questioned the turn of events, and wondered if providence was at work, not allowing them to turn any other

These thoughts gave brief reprieve, but the peace was eclipsed by the ominous reverberations of an organ, rattling rafters like the damning voice of God, a voice always there, a relentless reminder of the past. "Yes, I know," he answered. It was then the small screened window slid open. He tipped his flask and straightened his posture, crossed himself and listened to the words he desperately needed to say: "Bless me Father, for I have sinned."

