

constantly striving to improve myself and to pass on to others the knowledge I may acquire in the process. I shall aspire to live a positive example while endeavoring to lift the spirits of my fellow prisoners as they once lifted mine.

And my thoughts now soar new hope- hope that someday all people will awaken to the light of their true nature of compassion and love, embracing again the concept of the "Golden Rule" which most of us learned while in kindergarten- the rule of treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves.

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from *The Talking Drum*,
Abdullah Ibraheem

WHISPER #285

by Kari Chamberlain

Whisper
Press against me; breathe
Your heartbeat; feel
Emotion caught in voice; hear
Your whisper in my ear
Hand tangles hair
Caressing some secret part
Of my soul; a whisper
Leads love into
Oblivion dying
Bliss
Whisper so quiet
The dew falls loud
Like thunder roars
My veins, my loins
Echo your desire
Whisper so softly
My soul must strain
To catch the words as
They soar into heaven
Screaming softness
Braving the dark
Only a lil' death
Oblivion
Explodes into light

Just
Whisper

Editor's note: The following account of the first days of prison life are extremely graphic in detail and have been edited for language and content. Reader discretion is advised.

Prison Survival Guide.... Part One

Entering prison for the first time can be a frightening experience. The noise level is what strikes you and it is unlike any noise that you have ever heard before. It's human noise and clamor. That, coupled with the sight of those dreary bars, made me think, "Man, what have I gotten myself into here?!" When you have entered prison, you have entered a world unto itself. Each prison is different. What applies to one prison certainly will not apply to another. Generally, certain common things will take place. You will be taken off of a bus or other transport, and led into the prison. While this is taking place, other inmates will be "sizing you up", and jeering at you, trying to intimidate you through fences, windows, etc. Keep your eyes forward, do NOT respond, and ignore it. Period. Once you are inside the prison, you will have to go through any number of humiliating experiences. You will get your photograph taken for your commissary card. You may be questioned. You WILL be strip searched. This is a very impersonal, and not at all private procedure. You and your fellow new prisoners will be herded together like cattle, and then made to form a line. You will be forced to strip, and stand in line, sometimes for more than an hour. After this process is done, you will generally be issued your staples. Your prison uniform, your blanket, etc. and sometimes a sack lunch. Then you enter the prison.

Nothing generally happens at first, but it will. You can count on someone paying you a visit, or someone stepping to you while you're eating and trying to take your food, etc. Unless you are sexually threatened, or you feel that your life is in SERIOUS danger, it is best to fight. Fight hard. As hard as you can without weapons until a hack comes and stops it. This will gain you respect. It won't keep you from having problems ever again, but there is no shortage of people who are so scared that they will submit to just about anything. If you are not one of those people, you're less likely to have a

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