

What Will They Say  
by Michael J. Crummer

Before there was any “Occupy Movement” in the streets, men and women like myself occupied Prisons across the nation ...

Before Black Lives Mattered in cities across the USA, there were: Black Lives, White Lives, Red Lives, and Brown Lives; that Mattered very little, just on the other side of the fence.

No one passed out “Pussy Hats” to hundreds of thousands of ladies who are raped daily behind these dark walls ...

The irony in all of this is most of us here, are the Mothers and Fathers, of those who protest;  
But our protests go unheard ...

So from the window of my soul, I look past the window of my cell and think hard;  
pondering my life up to this very hour ...

What will be said of me, what will they say?

Staring at the tons of concrete and steel, custom made for me; or for people like me ...  
I look up at my shelf, which is nothing more than six cubic feet of space ...

Then it occurs to me, all of the property that I own, all that I could ever leave behind; to my next of kin, resides within a humble six cubic feet of space ...  
which is equal to a grave ...

However, what resonates even deeper, is when I pass away, when I finally run out of rope;  
what will be the theme of my eulogy ...  
What will they say ...

The only thing that separates men from animals is the gift of leaving some sort of legacy to those we leave behind ...

So what will they say of me ...

What will my legacy be, am I even entitled to one; what impact did I have upon those whoever knew me ... will it matter to them ...

I must ask myself this question because it matters, I have to know, if I mattered;

or was my existence donated to science as a social experiment, to label me an Anti-Social Personality type for the furtherance of all mankind ...  
but I think not ...

I am not that important ...

Will I have enough family left, to speak of fond memories ... will old friends come from out of state, to pay respect ... or will my children, even still feel that connected to weep for me ...

Did I ever invest enough time in their lives, to roll over in my grave if they don't;

or did I give so much of myself to prison life that I forgot, and neglected my original life...

So what will they say ...

Is the sum of my life a sequence of arrest records, case numbers, transcripts, and prison files ...

I can delude myself to believe that I don't care; we use that phrase as a sort of pain killer to numb our reality ... but we do care what others think about us ... or say about us ...

I care at least because I know who I am, and what I am about; therefore I won't be misjudged by you or anyone else ... nor will I accept being ill defined when I'm gone ...

Even in this isolation from the world ... what would be my monumental contribution here in prison?

Did I help the illiterate to read, did I help to raise up orphaned children abandoned by family and the system; did I show kindness to the mentally unstable, was I a good neighbor, or a decent cellmate; or was I an absolute asshole, to everyone ...

What will they say ...

I have virtually been sentenced to a slow extinction;

I am a living fossil in museums across America, most of you will never visit;

nevertheless, in 10,000 years from now, when another civilization excavates my petrified remains from the ground ...

what will they say?