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Words Uncaged
(Short Story)

California Dream

Surprised by the sweet tweeting birds, I open my eyes. Sunlight on my face filling me with California's joy. Taking a moment to enjoy the moment, I wonder how long it has been since I felt such a simple pleasure. It seems like an eternity, but this is a new beginning for my miserable past has passed. I jump out my bed expecting to feel the cold concrete, and yet I feel the warm soft carpet. Walking out of my room and not my cell, I giggle, and head straight to the bathroom with a tub. For nearly two decades without a bath, only shower, I submerge myself in the warm water and feeling the sensation electrifying through my body. I release a long soothing breath. Relaxing and washing away all the tensions developed through the years of confinement in a hateful environment.

A delicious aroma emanating from the kitchen with the taste of seafood hanging in the air lures me to where mother sets a bowl of noodle, my favorite. A bittersweet feeling stabs my heart, joyful and happy to be back in my mother's kitchen, and yet, painful and sad for a once beautiful woman with long midnight hair, who now has hair of snow. Hurt, but I smile for this is my day and the dark past will not haunt me. Giving her the biggest hug, I then devour my first free meal. My father walks in and my heart drops. Tears of pain cascade from my sadden, uncontrolled, I weep at his side. "How can he be here?" a small voice whispers. Something is not right, it urges me; feeling of uneasiness for reality seems out of place. A vague sound echoes in the back of my head. Too elated to care, I dismiss the echo, for this day is fair.

Standing on the beach with my toes snug in the California sand, I feel every golden grain against my skin, and delight in their caress. My feet scream their pleasure after years of stomping on cold concrete prison yards, walking that gray gravel road. California cool winds breeze across my cheeks, wooing me off my feet. The smell of freedom with its California fresh suppresses the memories of the stench of the walking dead dying flesh rotting in the California dungeon under the blistering California desert sun. Enjoying the spacious California coast, for I'm no longer compacted in a two men cell that is designed for one at most. Yet again, a whisper of an echo brushes against my consciousness, pulling me from reality. As the echo gets louder, it stops short -- there she is with her long silky hair, walking towards me. My heart skips once or twice as I am lost in her deep brown eyes. Reality ceases and time stops, nothing exists, no pain, no pleasure, but only my California love. What could have been seconds or eternity, it matter not for in my heart she was never forgot. We stop short. With a low angelic voice, she asks, "Where have you been? I laugh "Prison." Then she whispers in my ear "You're here now. For so long you have been alone, but now you're where you belong."

This moment I have dreamt a thousand times. Her angelic voice becomes exotic, my breath shortens, but it gets louder as it mingles with the echo emanating loudly from the depth of my subconscious, bouncing from every corner of my mind.

"Five minute to chow! You have five minute to chow!" it finally rings out.

Eyes pop open.

"Damn it!"

F@#king gun tower!

"Man, two decades and counting. When will this end?"