

Friends In Prison

There are those who say there is no such thing as a friend in prison. One man was heard to say, "I. have no friends here, only associates." He went on to say, "My friends are outside." What is it about prison that creates this thinking? Is prison so alienating that a person cannot even think of friendship as a possibility? Friendship is fed by trust, care, sharing, deep feelings, and other such qualities. Is it impossible for the soil of prison to nurture such things?

Friends by Brandon Jones, Georgia Death Row:

At about 8:15 am today, Mike, while on the exercise yard, went over the 20-foot cyclone fence which has mile and miles of rolled barbed wire across the top. It first appeared to be an escape attempt from Georgia's Diagnostic and Classification Center, the prison that houses Georgia's electric chair. However, instead of heading for the next equally high and barbed wire perimeter fence, he ran to the side of the cell house, where he climbed to the roof of the building, and began a low-crouched trek to the far end where the execution chamber is located. At just after 7:00 pm, Mike's friend, William Boyd Tucker, is scheduled to be executed in that chamber. After reaching the point above where William is being held, awaiting execution, Mike began shouting for his friend. All the while he and William were yelling back and forth, the guards were ordering him to halt or be shot. He continued what must have been a very poignant farewell until he was physically taken from the roof. They are just friends, nothing more, but certainly, nothing less. Awed by my fellow prisoner's loyalty, it occurred to me that if William never knew a friend in his life, on the day he is scheduled to die he knows the true meaning of friendship.