

## HOLLOW

LAMARR STARKIM LITTLE<sup>∞</sup>

Prison nights are silent and full of emptiness.  
Some nights I stay up late to read.  
While reading, cries of those condemned can be overheard.  
Inaudible whispers echoing off the walls.  
Sadness envelopes me,  
Like a state blanket covered in lint, or maybe shade or rain  
Yeah, rain—that's more like it.  
Because it feels as if I'm soaked in an abyss of steel,  
Wondering if my voice will echo.  
I can't hear myself, but I know,  
One day I will.  
I continue to listen.  
Anticipating.  
And expecting.  
However, nothing.

I turn a page to continue, but the book feels heavy;  
The words are moving.  
My eyes attempt—though unsuccessfully—to hold them still.  
Objects lacking in form.  
A toilet flushes, dragging my dreams away.  
Washing out at a faraway place.  
Somewhere I've never been and never will see.  
Somewhere full perhaps, filled with hope.  
Unlike this hollow cell.

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<sup>∞</sup> Being a writer in prison is difficult. Finding your voice, writing original things, and being honest is easy; however, figuring out what to write about can be challenging. Presumably, a prisoner is expected to write about prison and longing for freedom. I've been incarcerated for twenty-three-years and I feel drawn to dispelling misconceptions about prison, or prisoners' rights opposed to civil rights. The majority of my writing is done in a cell; seldom so I write in the yard (because of the inevitable distractions). Things are constantly changing in this environment, perhaps more so than in the free world. Prison's "consistent inconsistency" frustrates you until it manifests in your writing. Paradoxically, many things in prison remain the same. I hope the literary community looks at the honesty in my writing. I find many writers today to be intellectually dishonest. I am an artist, designer, leather craftsman, poet, sculptor, writer; and, I am currently working towards my BA in social studies.  
–Lamar Starkim Little