

Nothing at All

ALI MORREALE

You sit and you look at all the strange faces,
on the bus that drives you not far.
All lost and hearts breaking for the ones whom they visit,
in the grey grotesque women's prison.

The driver gives guards count of people aboard,
while mirrors on a stick check below.
You sit and you wonder how desperate one is,
to risk death clinging on underneath.

When you stop you are called last name by last name,
and enter a big room filled with tables.
Uninviting and cold on the metal you sit,
You can feel being viewed from above.

The stink in the room is hard to forget,
of old fish and stale feet and burnt hair.
You sit and you try to forget what you're breathing,
it all sticks on you the long drive home.

My sister wears khaki and makeshift mascara.
She tells me of stories I laugh at
of inmates who did things you hear on TV,
but in the back of my mind I am sad for them.

You talk and you hug but not too loud or too long,
for the guards do not care who you are.
If you break any rules they will see and yell,
though you've done nothing wrong that you know of.

Now I can hug her as long as I want.
No one yells or tells me to stop.
We can scream and embrace in the place we grew up in
in our bedroom that smells like nothing at all.