

*My Cell*  
*By Jeremiah Martin*

The steel door slides open and makes a loud bang as it stops. I step into the rectangular eight by twelve foot concrete room. I realize this is not a dream. My crimes have caught up with me, and for the next five years, this is my home. This is my cell.

The first thin that catches my eye, off to the right, is a stainless steel toilet. This is like no toilet I have ever seen. There is no lid to put up or down and it looks like a bedpan full of water. The toilet is connected to the wall by a tall stainless steel box that has a sink on top. The sink has no knobs, nor a faucet for the water. There are push buttons for hot and cold water. The water is delivered by a single hole between the buttons and comes out like a water fountain.

The floor is bare concrete. I can see boot prints that were left in the cement by workers before it was dried. There are white paint splatters near the walls and some in random places in the middle of the floor. It is obvious the wall and ceiling painting took place quickly and with no concern for paint on the floor. All of the corners have small piles of dust and grime accumulated in them where a mop cannot reach. Hand wiping is out of the question. Unlike the colorful or symmetrical floors in some homes, this floor only adds to the gloom and sadness of this place.

The walls are a grey white. They put off the same feeling of a sky that may produce rain or snow by the end of the day...depending on where you are in the world and what season it is.

On the wall straight ahead of the door, there are two metal bunk beds. They are not on stands of legs. They are bolted directly into the wall. Covering each one is a very thin mint green plastic mattress. One of these "racks", as they are called here, will serve as my bed and my dresser...for the few items of clothing I have.

There are no windows! The cell is lit up by a long industrial fluorescent light. It has a loud hum. This light will not only serve as the single light source in the cell, it will also serve as the clock. It automatically comes on at five a.m. and goes off at eleven p.m.

I walk to the racks, sit down on the bottom one. I take a deep breath and wish I had not. My nostrils were filled with a mixture of stale sweat and stagnant water. Before I can slip into sadness, a loud bang causes me to jerk. As I do, I slam my head into the rack above me. The noise was just the door going shut...now it is just me and my cell.