

# Adult Category

## 1<sup>st</sup> Place- Rick Stoddart

### 20 Years is not a lifetime, but it is.

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Sunday, Tuesday, Monday, Friday, Wednesday, Saturday, Thursday

These are days of the week. Every week. Over and over. In any order. It doesn't matter.

There is the sun. There is the night. Dinner, sleep, work, again.

Routine is solid and constant and looming like The Tablerock.

In the hanging quiet, there is a spatter of voices. Boise alive and noisy. Somewhere, not here.

What matters, does not matter anymore. This world is lines, and walls, and bars.

Perhaps what matters most is the feelings of the man looking down in tower.

Let's keep him fed and happy. A paycheck in his hand.

Let's let him lift his black-eyed child in the air.

Swing him round and round and round

Giggling all the while.

That child will float away sooner than not. Away.

To places not here...God, please not here.

20 years is not a lifetime, but it is.

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place- Susan Reuling Furness

### Prison Walls

Together we protected

Restrained and contained

They trusted us

To maintain law and order

We imprisoned the offender

The rapist and murderer

Pinned down the rampant thief.

Listen closely, you will hear

Clanging shackles and keys

Inhale deeply, you will smell rancid

Smoke

Taste the anguish, defiance

Feel the criminals' contrition

Did we teach him a lesson?

Respect and Obey

A century ago

As mortared sandstone, we stood

A backbone against heinous crime

But we got shut down

They made a museum

Hung festooned party lights on

Turret and guard

Now marriages vows are spoken

In a house across the yard

Some cynics say

Nothing's changed.

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3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Barbara Martin-Sparrow

We drove right through  
The center of them,  
A fancy dame  
In a brand new car  
And 2 young girls,  
Right to the Doctor's window.

She gets out  
In her pretty dress and pearls  
It's all murky out  
With bright prison lights  
And dark shadows.  
Did she lock our doors?

Several times I went inside the gates  
Bored guard standing there  
and tower men  
watching over us as  
we came within  
Keep moving! says the guard

The prisoners surrounding us  
Noisily mulling around  
In their dungarees  
Shirts with  
Caps pulled down.  
Is this exercise time?

I thought she went inside  
What's taking so long?  
Sometimes it's creepy  
Being a Pharmacy family friend  
She comes back.

Keep moving! Says the guard.  
But some men slouch against a wall staring.  
They bore holes  
right through your soul.  
Yet the meds are supposed to help them  
(Or keep the drugstore out of debt).

As we back up  
The bells start ringing  
The prisoners go inside for bed.  
We drive away  
I smell the night air  
And enjoy the movement of the car escaping.

Years later she was murdered.  
Maybe taken  
By a released felon  
Who coolly watched  
The drug deliveries  
So long ago?

Note: This is a true story in my life in the late 1960's at the Boise, Id State Penitentiary

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## Honorable Mention- Bruce R. Croffy

### Glory Be

Life like an endless queue  
at a gate that won't open,  
the misstep,  
temptation,  
rage of the moment  
spiraling down these chill fallow hills,  
to this prison,  
the muscled walls,  
the tattooed whispers  
escaping like hiss of rusted pipe,  
escaping,  
a vapid wish like steam sweat on grungy glass.  
The last of them left

so many years ago,  
but these spirits prevail,  
like Ray Snowden,  
ghost grip to the bars,  
dead-on stare to the hills  
with no sight in Siberia,  
just waiting.  
Waiting on a wish,  
Planted on whisper,  
These forever days  
Counted like prayer on beads of regret,  
...is now and ever shall be  
World without end...

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## Honorable Mention- Dzevad Vrabac

### “THE TRAP DOOR IN THE FLOOR”

Condemned, in between the walls, your fate  
sealed by the scribe's pen – in a new costume  
for the last role – a rope performer is your final show.  
A rave – yard bird – with the pinioned limbs  
and your feet oscillating in the air.  
With the mark of Cain – for your brother's slain –  
the two wrongs put us all in shame.  
At the gallows with the devil and the hangman  
as your judges; you are fasten with a knot.  
The spirit of gravity will swallow you at the dawn,  
a punishment for the crime. An eye for an eye  
is an ancient rite, but cruel and unusual is this  
Bill of right; for mercy I beg in fright.  
Ah, life – have I drank your essence? Have I  
spoiled your form? And, if I am – lost in a molecule –  
eternally bouncing in a seed of a grain? Well, then –  
death, sweep me up - when you turn off the light.  
Turn the knob and let me drop – if I am short –  
Let the government pick up the tab. For I have  
lived on the credit and my death is just another loan.