

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2016/10/21/voices-from-solitary-sad-flutes/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | October 21, 2016

Francis Bauer Harris has been on Death Row at Greene State Correctional Institution for 19 years. He was convicted of first degree murder in 1997, though he continues to maintain his innocence. On Death Row, Harris spends 23 to 24 hours a day in solitary confinement. According to a friend with whom he corresponds, he feels like at times he is experiencing the onset of symptoms of solitary confinement and has observed it in others. The only way he and others can cope is to try to keep his mind busy with his own legal work and to find solace in art and poetry. The following poem, written in July 2016, is entitled Heartbreak in Solitary, aka Sad Flutes. Harris can receive mail at Francis Bauer Harris DL0556 PA, SCI Greene Death Row, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370. Jean Casella

There is this hole I guess
it is where my heart used to be
it is so annoying
I mean I lay on my bed to watch t.v.
and if I set the remote down it falls in there
or my glasses they always fall In there if I set them down
all kinds of food crumbs end up in there if i eat too
but the thing that really gets on my nerves is late at night
when it is very quiet and all the noise is gone
there is a breeze that blows thru the cell
and it goes in there and makes this sound
its hard to describe
its a low wailing like someone crying
the sound of hope dying a slow painful death
its like the sound a dream makes when it is dying
slowly and in much pain
it sounds like a sad flute as it is blown through
but I think I know how to shut it up
I have all this sadness and pain
just pouring out of me right now
I can ball it up and stuff it in there

and you know if you let sadness and pain stew for a time

it will turn to anger and resentment

and that can really fill up that hole

yeah Ill put it all in there

no more sad flute

The Voices from Solitary series publishes dispatches from people surviving the lived experience of solitary confinement.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 30, 2022

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September 6, 2022

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Powerful stuff

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