

The Prison of Resentment

by Russ Harris

In the prison of resentment,
I knew all the inmates well.
We had built the place together,
We'd created our own hell.

We roamed the well-worn corridors
Of ancient fear and pain,
And shared our tales of hurt and loss,
Relived it all again.

We talked about the ones who left,
The ones that turned away;
The ones that never had the time
To love, or laugh, or play;

The ones that couldn't see us,
And the ones that let us down;
The ones that threw us in the sea,
And left us there to drown;

The ones that liked to cheat us,
And the ones that loved to lie,
And the ones that mocked and beat us,
And the ones that made us cry.

In that prison of resentment,
There was not a single gate;
No guards, no locks, no iron bars;
What kept us there was hate,

And fear, and hurt, and shame and guilt;
Those feelings held us fast.
They bound us up like poisoned cords,
And chained us to the past.

But then, one day, a visitor,
Who didn't give his name,
Assembled us, and talked to us,
Of anger, hurt and blame.

He said, "You cut yourselves with knives,
And hope that others bleed.
You give away your precious lives,
To grow this bitter seed.

You've suffered, hurt and lost so much,
Your wounds are clear to see;
But counting all the blows you took
Will never set you free.

Resentment is like armour
That readies you for war,
But underneath the chest plate
There's a wound that's red and raw.

And if you want to leave this hell,
That wound will need to heal,
If not you'll stay here, in your cell,
Entombed in rusting steel.

So seek that place within you
Which no knife can ever reach;
That source of deepest healing
Of which all the prophets teach.

And find that well of kindness,
(Which has been there all along)
And from it, gently bathe your wound,
And heal; and then grow strong."

In the prison of resentment,
I thought all my love had died;
But I listened to that visitor,
Sought out that place inside.

And I found that well of kindness,
And I put it to the test,
And I bathed my wound, and healed it,
And I laid the past to rest.

So now, outside that prison,
I am living, I am free.
And I know that nameless visitor
Was really part of me.

And all those other inmates
Who shared my time in hell,
I know that every one of them
Was part of me as well.

And in the prison of resentment,
There's still a cell that bears my name,
And at times I get drawn back there,
Pulled by anger, hurt and shame.

But now I know the way to leave
That dark and brooding place;
With kindness, tend the bleeding wound,
And show the world your face.

