

Jail, No Bail

By William Heath

At Parchman, we're stripped and searched, issued a towel, a bar of soap, a toothbrush, sheets and pillow cases, a striped prison outfit. Filthy cells are full of bugs.

A jail is just another house, less comfortable than most, I admit, room service leaves something to be desired, if you like three squares of rice and beans you can't

complain, a mattress thick as a poor man's wallet and twice as hard, no seat on the toilet, rusty water seeps from the tap, a view through iron bars of a guy

in another cell staring back, one visitor asked us to say something in "commonist." Entertainment is not out of the question, cigarettes smoked down to the filter

serve as chess pieces, singing freedom songs always lifts our spirits, drives the guards crazy. They took our sheets, then our mattresses,

and when we wouldn't stop singing, our soap, towels, and toothbrushes, but we raise our voices, "Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on."

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