

Face-Slashings

by Vincent Toro

In U.S. prisons

There are reportedly

60 face-slashings per month.

That is an average of 2 per day.

I am sad for the victims of these attacks,

But I am sadder for the perpetrators,

So accustomed to the acrimony of imposed walls

That they must scar any glance threatening to penetrate.

Do they fear what judgment a face

Might cast when looking upon them?

Or do they fear the possibility that an eye

Or cheekbone might deliver a particle of tenderness?

I lament these face-slashers,

For each face is a distorted mirror of ourselves,

And in each mortal mirror they engage

They see only what their oppressor sees in them.

I lament this population of caged flowers
Who can no longer bear to see themselves at all,
Poor men made ready to destroy anything
That may project light onto their image.

And I lament this world which
Turns good men into face-slashers.