

Billy's Lament

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I'm locked up in jail convicted of crime
Berated, assailed with insult and time
Enough to consume the years I have left
A sentence so long it leaves me bereft
Of prospect to live to see freedom's light
It's hard to imagine a much grimmer plight
Yet through the ordeal my soul is at peace
Sustained by your love and the hope of release.

In spite of the stigma, in spite of the pain
A puzzling enigma, hard to explain
Just why did I do it? How could I dare
To sacrifice all to give patient care?
Just what did I gain and what was my point
That led me to risk my life in the joint?

My friends all advised me "Let patients go"
To their consternation, I just said "No"
At least as to those I thought I could aid
With motive so pure, why be afraid
The idea that I wanted drugs on the street
Was absurd on its face – a sure path to defeat
But what to do with those who abused
And likewise with those the cops had accused?

To keep them as patients was not to condone
Abuse and deception – to make it my own
I honestly thought I could help them reform
Too trusting and blind – too far from the norm
Of prudence and caution that fear would require
I hoped that my trust and faith would inspire
Reciprocal acts of contrition and health
But I was deceived by lies and by stealth.

My judgment was flawed I must now confess
Naïve to believe that I would impress
With compassion and care their pain to relieve
Those who set out to exploit and deceive.

Not only was I a soft, easy, mark
The target *du jour* of addict and narc
What's galling beyond the lies and betrayal
Corrupt and absurd like my life in jail
Is the claim that I'm the responsible one
For those who deceived for profit and fun
That those whose illicit drug dealing thrived
Were victims, no less, of a dastardly plot
As if I intended for them to be caught
In the snare of addiction and forced into crime
For this perverse logic I'm doing my time.

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