

# IF

*A prisoner's perspective  
with apologies to Rudyard Kipling*

If you can sleep in bed while tannoys beckon  
A long and seemingly endless list of names,  
Keep a strong, tight hold on your possessions  
Whilst others try to win them with mind games...  
If you can stay out of other people's business  
And ensure others stay out of your own,  
Think "It could be worse, in some ways we are lucky"  
Whilst everyone around you wants to moan...  
If you can cope with having no say in decisions,  
Nod and smile, although you don't agree,  
In your room, display your chapel calendar  
And not mark off the days until you're free...  
If you can put up with clothing going missing,  
And wearing the same shoes daily on your feet,  
Gulp down heaps of potato, rice and pasta,  
Feel blessed to find a single chunk of meat.  
If you can watch friends leave and not be saddened,  
Knowing that it will be your time soon,  
Return to your room and dance around wildly  
To the latest over-played pop tune...  
If you can keep your head held high  
Through all your times of hardship  
And leave, a stronger person in the end...  
Then this is your cell and everything that's in it,  
And what's more you can do prison, my friend.

*IF*

HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Drake Hall  
Silver Award for Poem  
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