

## CHRISTMAS IN D.C. JAIL

Should we live  
parsimonious lives  
in bare cells  
measuring out  
pleasures  
grain by grain  
hoarding love  
counting hours  
saving tears—  
or open up,  
let loose,  
refuse to become the ultimate commodity  
and risk squandering  
some resources we may need  
for all those long days  
and years  
to come?

Oh risk it, I say,  
give it up,  
because hope is not quantifiable  
and only grows through generosity,  
and prison life—all life—  
is labor-intensive:  
you have to struggle  
for what you get.

1989

## FOURTEEN DAYS, LOSS OF PRIVILEGES D.C. Jail

I don't do well with the prison authorities.  
Told to move,  
I stand stock still.  
"Stand still," they say—  
I move.

Ornery  
Bad  
Disobedient  
Unrepentant.  
I like me that way.

1989

## EATING POETRY D.C. Jail

After months of tasteless, tepid food,  
A fresh radish slice burns my mouth.

1989