

June 13, 2018
5:06 am

Ivan, my cellmate stays up until midnight and gets up for work at 5:30 am. I go to bed around 10 pm and wake around 4 am. Living crammed into a six by nine foot cell with another person requires consistent consideration of each other's rest and movements.

Trying not to rustle the mound of papers littering my cot-size bunk like a desktop, I move quietly to avoid contributing to the ever-present noise that foils rest in prison. Think of industrial factory decibels from steel doors slamming into steel doorframes and motorized gates wheeling open and shut while walkie-talkie radios crackle. Now imagine that these are the quiet hours. Add in the sounds of snores, farts and somebody's T.V. blaring and you have the best time to rest.

We are in a cell with a window that looks out into the thirty-foot wall and the metal window frame is hard to open so it requires a hefty tug. Forget doing it quietly. My hand creeps forward like a ninja as I hope acting swiftly will minimize the disruption. Pulling on the frame, the hinges screech and Ivan, a best friend and brother, tosses and turns on the bunk right below my movement.

"Sorry bro" I mumble quietly.

I feel guilty for waking him up but I thought I heard something important and wanted to listen further. Opening the window and filling the cell with cold early morning air, I hear what I was hoping for.

On the ground less than five feet away, two birds sat chirping.