

## THERE SHE STOOD

She rose from her bed,  
stepped forward, a pained frown  
painted on her beautiful but forlorn face.

As she neared the bars, she whispered ...  
thus far, my life has been a disgrace.

She'd had no choice – or so she believed,  
For, from the moment she'd been conceived,  
Abuse in the womb - more beyond.

When come of age, left on her own,  
She opened her legs to any paying John who came along.

I had to survive, to stay alive – she spoke, her voice shaking, nearly breaking.

Thus, for years, she scaled cliffs of shame and fear,  
Growing hard, and cold, tho still young of body, her spirit so old.

Was there ever hope, he began to ask. Was there ... ?  
But, she raised her hand, to interrupt ... then, slowly shook her head ...

No.

So, there she stood, having accepted her fate -  
Yet, now, every morning, hot food on a plate.  
Every night, an **UN - SHARED** bed,  
No longer needing to pretend she cared.

Prison, a refuge, had given her time -  
saved her from having to recite that same old line ...  
on the street, or in a bar, or being hailed from a passing car ...

Hey there, honey, wanna take me home ...  
Regardless of the answer, her – always - alone.

Inside her, now, a secret yearning  
Perhaps, now, she'd have time for learning  
How to live a life with her head held high?

Yes, there she stood – but without regret,  
With, perhaps, a faint hint of pride.

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This is a collage of people once known. In college, a full-time student by day, a full-time police clerk by night. The dichotomy was huge. At 22, a degree in hand, I was drafted, a medic, army psych wards, soldiers and dependents alike. Once again at home, I worked family crisis intervention, then probation and parole, much later on, after marriage and children, child abuse and neglect. This is what I call 'true enough' – a story based on people I'd met, come to know and what they went thru to make a go, in what can be a very cruel world.