

Breaking My Silence (March 5, 2026)

On December 1, 2022, three weeks after the run on the exchange that ultimately felled FTX, a reporter from a major national newspaper flew down to the Bahamas to interview Sam. The reporter had been one of the few public skeptics about FTX during the two years that Sam and FTX were on top of the world, and Sam hoped that he would show the same independent spirit now that the rest of the media had turned on him overnight. He and Sam talked for three hours about what had happened. At the end, the reporter said to Sam, “What you say is plausible, but my editor will never let me publish it.” He was right. (Since it is an unusual thing for a reporter to say to an interview subject, I subsequently reached out to the reporter to confirm that Sam remembered the comment correctly.)

I was grateful for the reporter’s candor, because it allowed me to start making sense of the bonfire that had engulfed us. At that point, the only official statement that had been issued concerning the collapse of FTX was the First Day Petition filed by John Ray, CEO of the Debtors, on November 17, 2022, six days after he had taken over as CEO of the company.¹ As Ray subsequently stated, he didn’t know anything about FTX prior to assuming control at 4:30 am on the morning of November 11, 2022. He was, however, able to ascertain two things over the ensuing five days. The first was that the corporate records and controls at FTX were, as he described it in his Declaration to the Bankruptcy Court two months later, “a dumpster fire.”² The second was that Sam was “potentially compromised”³ --relevant because it explained why Ray chose to disregard the balance sheets Sam’s co-founder Gary Wang had prepared in the middle of the liquidity crisis, which showed both FTX and FTX US to be

¹ Affidavit/Declaration in Support of First Day Motion (Declaration of John J. Ray III) (November 17, 2022) <https://restructuring.ra.kroll.com/FTX/Home-DocketInfo>, Doc 24, p. 2.

² Supplemental Declaration of John J. Ray (January 17, 2023), <https://restructuring.ra.kroll.com/FTX/Home-DocketInfo>, Doc. 511, p. 4. Daniel Chapsky, the former Head of the Data Team at FTX and the person whom Ray hired to do an independent financial analysis of FTX in January 2023, has challenged that characterization. Affidavit of Daniel Chapsky, States v. Bankman-Fried (1:22-cr-00673), Motion for a New Trial, Doc. 583, parags. 9-21 (February 10, 2026).

³ Affidavit/Declaration in Support of First Day Motion, <https://restructuring.ra.kroll.com/FTX/Home-DocketInfo>, Doc 24, p. 2.

solvent. In Ray's words, he would not credit them "because [they] w[ere] produced while the Debtors were controlled by Mr. Bankman-Fried."⁴

Ray hadn't talked to Sam at that point, or indeed since. As he explained to Michael Lewis, he didn't need to because "[h]e could look at a person and in ten minutes know who they were, and never need to reconsider his opinion."⁵ In Sam's case, a photograph was enough. As he told Lewis:

'I looked at his picture, and thought, *There's something wrong going on with him. . . .* There's people that are born criminals. And there're people who become criminals. I think he became a criminal. The how and why he became a criminal I don't know. I think maybe it takes an understanding of this kid and his parents.'⁶

Once the First Day Petition was released, Sam was treated as presumptively guilty by most of the media and hence by the world. Ray's opening line ("Never in my career have I seen such a complete failure of corporate controls and such a complete absence of trustworthy financial information as occurred here." . . .) became the authoritative pronouncement on the failure of FTX and was quoted so many times over the next month and a half that it earned Ray a spot in the New York Times 2022 year end News Quiz (question 23 of 25).

There were a few dissenting voices in those first three weeks. One person, swimming against the tide, wrote, "Call me crazy, but I believe SBF's story." People called him names much worse than crazy. An economist from Duke published an op ed in the NY Times in which he described the basic economic relationship between FTX, Alameda, and customers as commonplace and legal in the US for many financial institutions, including banks, and analogized what happened at FTX to the solvency crisis at Jon Corzine's hedge fund. The op ed generated almost no comment and wasn't picked up by others. By December 1, when the reporter told Sam that his account of what had happened was plausible but his editor would never let him publish it, dissenting voices had all been silenced.

A few days later, Sam, still in the Bahamas and working around the clock with the Joint Provisional Liquidators appointed by the Bahamian government to reboot the exchange and resume

⁴ Id., pp. 6, 8, 10, 13.

⁵ Michael Lewis, *Going Infinite*, p. 234.

⁶ *Going Infinite*, p. 235.

withdrawals, accepted an invitation from the Chair of the House Financial Services Committee to testify about FTX's collapse. His lawyers were horrified. Why would someone under criminal investigation voluntarily submit to three hours of testimony under oath? As one of them said at the time, "this may be the first time that one of my clients breaks into jail." Sam's answer to Joe and me was simple. "All I have left is the truth." He *wanted* to testify under oath, in order to communicate to the world that he was staking his own freedom on the truth of what he would say.

Sam's lawyers weren't the only ones horrified at the prospect that he would testify under oath before the whole country. So also was the Biden Administration. The afternoon before Sam's scheduled testimony, Damian Williams, the US Attorney for the SDNY, announced Sam's criminal indictment, which had been obtained three days earlier, and the chair of the SEC, Gary Gensler, simultaneously released a substantially overlapping civil complaint for fraud. An hour later, at the Justice Department's and the FBI's behest, the Bahamian authorities arrested Sam, detained him overnight in jail (unprecedented in the Bahamas for a nonviolent offender) and delivered him the next morning to a bail hearing that was dragged out for six hours until the House Financial Services Committee hearing had concluded. Ray, testifying before the Committee unopposed, elaborated at length on Sam's untrustworthiness, an assessment he revised upward to "villain" the following month in a sworn Declaration to the Bankruptcy Court.⁷

Joe and I, shellshocked in those first few weeks and clueless how to navigate our way through this unfamiliar hellscape, did not speak to the press at all. A couple of weeks after we returned to California with Sam under house arrest, we did our first interview. Joe didn't want to do it, correctly foreseeing that no good could come of it. But I still shared Sam's faith in the power of facts to change peoples' minds, or at least the belief it was the only weapon we had, however inadequate it might prove. The interview was in my office at the law school, surrounded by law books that I, of course, hoped would silently convey that I was not just Sam's mother, that I also spoke from a different, unbiased source of authority. The reporter didn't bother to feign interest as I bombarded him with what I thought were the most compelling facts that cast doubt on the allegations against Sam. When the story

⁷ Supplemental Declaration of John J. Ray (January 17, 2023), <https://restructuring.ra.kroll.com/FTX/Home-DocketInfo>, Doc. 511, p. 4.

came out, the only reference to anything I said was, “His parents must be the only people on earth who still believe in his innocence.”

Sometime in the spring, friends connected us to a couple of crisis comms people. Their advice was the same: Anything you say now is only going to hurt Sam and yourselves. You have to wait for the poison to drain out of the system first. How long are we talking about? I asked. A year, maybe two, it could be longer. It all depends. And even then, they added, you can’t be the ones to speak. No one will believe you. You have to find neutral, third-party validators who will soften the ground. It seemed unthinkable to me to stand by silently for one, two, three years as the world destroyed Sam.

A couple of months later, we did an interview with a national magazine. Joe didn’t want to do it, but I once again prevailed. I believe it was the last print interview either of us did. The journalist explained that she wanted to do a human interest piece and wasn’t planning on getting into questions of innocence or guilt. I said that was fine, but “just so there’s no ambiguity about it, I believe Sam is innocent.” I no longer expected to persuade anyone of that fact, but I also didn’t want people to misinterpret my silence as acquiescence in the world’s verdict. “You don’t have *any* doubts?” she asked, seemingly incredulous. I said no. “How can you be so sure?” “Because I know who Sam is and I know what actually happened,” I said.

I was surprised by the question and its almost touching assumption that if I did have doubts (I don’t), I would share them with her, at least off the record. But I was more surprised by what prompted the question: her incredulity that, even allowing for the fact that we were his parents, we could be so blind to what was so screamingly obvious to the rest of the world. Curiously, it was that offhand comment from a reporter of (I think) good will that finally persuaded me that the crisis comms people were right. At least for now, there was nothing we could say publicly in defense of Sam that would do any good. As the months went by, staying silent became easier, because it became habitual and because it allowed Joe and me to detach from the poison flooding every inch of the public square—a decision that has contributed greatly to our sanity over the past two and a half years.

For Sam, silence was not an option. His urgency, eventually bordering on desperation, to get *someone* to listen to his side of the story made him an object of universal derision in those first few

months (why, exactly?) and, by the sort of twisted logic that takes over when confirmation bias sets in, was itself treated by the world as evidence of his guilt. It broke my heart, over and over, to watch him slamming his head against the same wall on the long-shot chance that this time he could break through. Everyone was dying to talk to him about how it felt to go, overnight, from being a 31-year-old multi-billionaire at the top of the world to an indicted felon wearing an ankle bracelet 24/7 and living under house arrest in his parents' home. But no one was interested in hearing his explanation of what had happened and why the government's allegations against him made no sense. Still, Sam persevered, making himself available to any serious journalist he thought might possibly be willing to listen.

In late winter of 2023, a reporter for a well-known national magazine who had done a favorable and (more importantly) thoughtful story on Sam a year earlier when he was on top of the world flew out to interview Sam. They talked for a couple of hours. Before he left, the reporter asked if he could talk to Joe and me alone.

"I don't know what to do," he said to us. "After talking to Sam, I find it hard to believe that he isn't telling the truth." "So what's the problem?" I asked. "Everyone else seems certain he's guilty. Plus, his three co-founders pleaded guilty and testified against him." Joe or I—I can't remember which—explained to him the reality of how guilty pleas and cooperation agreements are extracted by the Government. In my patient, professorial voice, I suggested what seemed to me the obvious solution to his quandary: he should look into the facts and decide the truth for himself. He was startled by the advice. I was startled that he needed it. Sam offered any serious-seeming reporters access to the hundreds of pages of documents and analyses he had put together. I asked if Sam had made that offer to him. He said yes. "You could start there, and see where it leads," I suggested, trying to be helpful. He never followed up.

It was Kaplan who finally silenced Sam. After Sam agreed to be interviewed by a New York Times reporter who was doing a story about portions of Caroline Ellison's diaries that someone—likely the government—had leaked to him, Kaplan revoked Sam's bail and remanded him to prison on August 11, 2022, seven weeks before his trial began.

Although I stopped speaking to reporters on the record, I continued to talk off the record with a few I still had some hope for, occasionally sharing some of the documents, also off the record, that Sam or I had drafted analyzing and documenting different aspects of the case. In the course of those conversations, a handful volunteered that they believed Sam was innocent, or at the very least that the government's allegations didn't add up, but none of them was willing to say so publicly. I understood why any individual reporter would choose not to get involved. What I couldn't understand, and the reason I kept trying, was why the entire profession would make the same choice. Setting truth and justice to the side, I would have thought that if every one of your competitors is zigging, the way to make a mark for yourself is to zag.

Clearly I was wrong. I've thought a lot about why.

The reporter who had told Sam in November 2022 that his explanation of what happened at FTX was plausible but his editor would never let him publish it resurfaced from time to time over the ensuing year and a half, offering various implausible justifications for the press's completely one-sided coverage of Sam and FTX. When I brought it up on the eve of the trial, he earnestly explained that there was a strong ethic among reputable media outlets that journalists should not say anything to suggest the defendant was innocent until the trial was over, lest they interfere with the course of justice (!) Things will change, he reassured me, once it is over. When he reached out a couple of months after Sam was sentenced to fact-check a hit piece he'd written on our whole family, he and I had a lengthy email exchange, heated on my part, seemingly good-natured on his. (I knew there was no point in arguing. I just hate being played for a fool.) When Sam, responding from prison, brought up the press's relentlessly one-sided coverage of the FTX case, the reporter replied:

“You are not wrong to say that there is an unwritten rule in journalism that every story about you and FTX is required to be negative. I feel bad for you, but on the other hand it balances out the puff pieces we write about most companies.” [!]

Sam started to draft a serious response but-- more disciplined than I-- thought better of it. As he wrote to us later, “I re-read my draft from his perspective, sighed, deleted it, and wrote back: ‘Totally understand. If that ever changes, I'd be excited to talk!’” The reporter couldn't possibly

have believed the justifications he offered. Did he think we would? And why did he bother? He had all the power in this relationship, such as it was. He didn't need to justify anything to us.

Over time, it became clear that I was just wrong about the incentives facing the mainstream media. If the agreed-on narrative is a sensationalist story with a charismatic cartoon villain and fantastical numbers, any other account is going to have a hard time competing for eyeballs. When the alleged crime is financial fraud, the alternative explanations are likely to be more complicated and much less viscerally satisfying. "He stole \$8 billion dollars of customer money!" is a headline that grabs everyone. "No, actually, he didn't steal it, his company borrowed it, which they were apparently allowed to do under the Terms of Service that governed their legal relationship with other FTX customers, and they always had the assets to repay the loans"—not so much. One prominent journalist I spoke with suggested that the uniformity of the press's response was not simply the result of thousands of reporters and editors facing the same incentives and independently making the same choice. Any reporter or editor who dissented from the public narrative, he said, would face censure and ostracism within the profession. I have no idea the extent to which that is true, or why it would be.

In the past year, a few stories have appeared that were a little softer around the edges. No one came out and said, wait a minute, the government's story doesn't add up, might the world have gotten this whole thing wrong? But any account that portrays Sam as a three-dimensional human being, mentions the fact that all customers are getting repaid (98 percent already have been) and that the money apparently was there all along, or suggests that a twenty-five year sentence seems barbaric for a nonviolent first offender in a case where all the victims will be made whole, is a step in the right direction. In addition, several excellent academic pieces have been written on different aspects of the case. When I have a chance, I will repost them here. But cumulatively, they have not made a discernable dent in the public narrative.

The longer that narrative remains unchallenged, the harder it will be for anyone to challenge it. Perhaps some investigative journalist will come along with an old-styled passion for justice and a willingness to put her time and reputation on the line to get at the truth. Or perhaps someone will

realize that the story that *hasn't* been told has its own different but equally compelling cast of heroes and villains and a plot line (involving official misbehavior at multiple levels) that conceivably could attract even more eyeballs than a morality tale of the young man who stole \$8 billion dollars of customer money and did what with it, exactly?

But while we wait for that person to show up, Sam the flesh and blood human being sits in prison. Over time, he will fade from the memories of most of the people who knew him, as will the enormity of the personal tragedy that a young man with staggering talents and noble ambitions will spend most of the rest of his useful life in prison for a crime he didn't commit--that no one committed.

For Joe and me, of course, it is not possible to forget. I wake up every morning thinking of Sam, and he is usually my last thought at night. I try not to focus on the hours in between, what his daily life in prison is actually made up of. Sam is a stoic. If his days are filled with horrors big or small, he is unlikely ever to tell us, unless he thinks it is something we can help fix. So I have to listen carefully between the words, read carefully between the lines, to figure out whether, for now, he is still holding steady. Joe and I, both fortunate to have lived full and meaningful lives, would gladly change places with him if we could, to give him back the life that was stolen from him. That option is, alas, not on offer. But we will keep fighting for his freedom for as long as he is in prison and we are alive.

Last summer, as we approached the three-year mark, I decided I was done waiting for others to speak out. I am still Sam's mother and hence still presumptively the second least trustworthy source in the world. But after three years of poring over every detail of the case, I probably know more about it than anyone other than Sam-- perhaps even more than Sam himself at this point, since he has been deprived of access to most of his personal files in prison and has only limited access to the outside world. Much of what I have to say about the case is documented in publicly available sources. I will provide cites to them so people can make up their own minds. I have no grand strategy here, and no particular confidence that anything I say will make a difference. But at this point, given everything we have lost, I don't think there is much more to lose by trying.

There is another consideration that has weighed on me in deciding to end my silence.

Joe and I are not, in fact, the only people on earth who believe Sam is innocent. There are countless others. There are the former FTX employees, many of whom not only knew Sam well but also knew all about the supposedly secret loans that were at the heart of the government's allegations of fraud and (with good reason) never raised any concerns about them. I would venture that the list of former FTXers who believe Sam is innocent includes most if not all of the people who testified against him at trial.⁸ There are the lawyers who recommended or structured the loans in question, drafted the terms of service that disclosed them to customers, or vouched for the financial relationship between FTX and Alameda to government agencies. There are VCs and lenders who invested in FTX and believe that, while managerial error was obviously a significant cause of FTX's collapse, no crime was committed.

There are also the many Bahamians who worked closely with Sam over the year that FTX was based there. As accusations against Sam started flying, a very senior Bahamian official was reported to have said privately, "There isn't a criminal bone in that young man's body." Based on numerous conversations with others, I can say with confidence that that view was widely shared among Bahamian officials, as well as the many people in the Bahamas for whom FTX offered the first real hope of a better life.

Some of the people who worked with Sam at FTX showed up at the trial in a show of silent support. Others wrote letters to Kaplan in advance of sentencing, describing the Sam they knew and asking for leniency. Many more have reached out to us or to mutual acquaintances over the past three years to express their shock and sorrow about what happened and to ask if they can help. But until

⁸ My conjecture is based on what I know they knew, what they did and didn't say at trial, and the circumstances under which they agreed to testify for the government. For what it's worth, here was Michael Lewis's take in an interview with the Washington Post the day after the trial began: "I saw the prosecutor's list of witnesses, and it maps on to the characters in the book in the most extraordinary way. I mean, what are they doing? They're telling a story. They're using the same characters I use to tell the story. And I want to see how they're going to tell the story, and I want to see how these characters behave differently than the characters behave with me. And I'm in touch with most of these characters. I've been interviewing them since it all fell apart. And they've told me what they're going to say, and some of them have said to me, I think Sam is innocent. So, it's kind of--I want to see all this unfold in the courtroom."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/washington-post-live/2023/10/06/transcript-michael-lewis-author-going-infinite/>

very recently, no one has been willing to say publicly what they have said privately to us: that they believe Sam is innocent.

There are also the hundreds if not thousands of people who knew Sam personally from high school, math camp, MIT, Jane Street, and philanthropic endeavors, and who knew him to be honorable to the core. People can change radically over time or reveal themselves to have been someone else all along. But with good reason, we usually assume that they don't—that who someone is today is continuous with who they were yesterday, and the day before that. And there are also the tens of thousands of people who are knowledgeable enough about financial markets to have surmised what actually happened at FTX, or knowledgeable enough about our criminal justice system to know how someone could end up prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to 25 years in prison for a crime they didn't commit.

All of those people, too, with very few exceptions, have remained publicly silent.

I understand. For any one person, the reasons to remain silent—fear of public shaming, orders from current employers, censure or ostracism from one's social community, plus the emotional toll of thrusting oneself into the public sphere—vastly outweigh the reasons to speak out. Those who were closest to the action at FTX had, and in some cases still have, an additional reason to remain silent: the threat of retaliation by the US government and/or the Debtors. Those fears are well-founded.

There are, at last, a few significant cracks in the wall of silence. Two of the people who originally offered to testify for Sam and pulled out out of fear of retaliation by the prosecution have come forward to provide an overview of the testimony they would have given. What they have said strikes at the heart of the prosecution's case against Sam, and forms the basis for the motion for a new trial that Sam filed last month.⁹ The more people who raise doubts publicly about Sam's guilt and the conduct of the prosecution and the Debtors in bringing him down, the safer each will be from retaliation and the more credible the message. By speaking out myself, I hope I can make it a little easier for others to do so.

⁹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BnxT4HLpIDNLY8nxOhvlshV3xA9TE5-n/view>;
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nW14eWzn_mcz7KTRD8uNQxEcq_LL1X2N/view.

Last fall, with the hearing on Sam’s appeal coming up, I decided to post [an analysis](#) of the trial itself. I wanted to answer the unspoken rhetorical question that, post-trial, ended all discussion before it began: if Sam is innocent, how come he was convicted? I also wanted to create a fuller public record of the prosecution’s and Kaplan’s misconduct than Sam’s lawyers could do in their briefs or oral argument. The rules of criminal procedure greatly restrict the arguments lawyers can raise as grounds for overturning a conviction. Even with those constraints, Sam’s lawyers presented a very strong case. But what they could not raise on appeal is at least as damning as what they could. As a private citizen, I am not bound by those same strictures.

In the four months since I posted the analysis, a few thousand people have downloaded it. Overall, the response has been positive. I don’t know if it will make any difference, but at the very least I have preserved a record for a future time when people may take more of an interest in figuring out the truth of the matter.

Stay tuned. More posts to come.

I want to give the last word to Sam. He has been keeping a journal since he was sent to prison in August 2023, which is now 500+ pages and counting. It is equal parts a sociology of prison life, philosophical musings, and reflections on himself and the outside world he briefly walked largely in. Sam is a wonderful writer as well as a deep thinker. I have no doubt that the journal will eventually be published in some form, and will make a difference in the world. In the meantime, writing it helps keep him connected to the person he was, and lets the close circle of family and friends with whom he shares it know that in some deep sense he is doing OK. It also reminds us that, despite all, he has not lost his dark sense of humor. Some of his vignettes could be lifted almost verbatim into a black comedy on prison life—say, Hogan’s Heroes minus the loveable Nazis.

This entry was written while he was at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, where he was housed for almost two years before being transferred to Terminal Island.

Writing to Live (SBF)

In the DSM-IV, anhedonia was a form of depression that centered on a generally diminished sense of pleasure; in the DSM-V, it does not mean anything at all.

I was in high school when I first realized it described me. It was the summer after my junior year, and I was at a summer camp--SciTech--which I didn't like. It was in Haifa, Israel; it was too hot and the air conditioning didn't work and all we had to eat was chicken schnitzel and I didn't like the other campers all that much and I was too lazy to do any actual work on my project. I was in the shower one morning, reflecting on all of that.

'I'm not happy, here', I thought to myself. And as I often do, I played around with the sentiment--is it *really* true?

'I'm not happy, here, unlike Mathcamp, where I was last summer; there, I remember being happy when....' I tried for a few minutes to finish the sentence, and failed. 'I'm not happy, here, unlike at high school, where--wait no I hate high school. Ok, I'm not happy, here, unlike....'

The third time I asked myself the question, I started to get an inkling of where this might all be headed. It didn't take sifting through many of my 'happy' memories to confirm that, in fact, in none of them was I actually, well, *happy*. I was *never* happy.

I guess there's a bit of a definitional issue here, but as far as I can tell, positive emotions are not something that I feel. They never have been. The closest I get is, sometimes, when there isn't a worry on my mind, I'm walking along, and a brisk wind blows past me, and all I can feel is the mild coldness enveloping me, and my mind blanks out. I'm at peace, completely neutral.

As much as I can get myself to do so, I've tried to devote my life to whatever's best for the world. I'd like to think that it's because it's the right thing to do; maybe part of it is also that there's no point in being selfish when you're completely anhedonic. Or maybe it's just something I tell myself; that's certainly what Kaplan thinks.

That doesn't mean that I don't have any sense of self--I do, fairly strongly at times. Some of it is 'in the moment'--my emotions, mostly--but not most of it. Most of it is in my mind; memories intertwined with intuitions, heuristics, and impressions. That, more than anything else, is 'Sam', not my physical body or sensations or name.

That Sam is decaying away rapidly. I *feel* it slipping away. I feel it, constantly, in the background, like you *feel* the clock ticking when a painful medical procedure is scheduled in an hour, or when you have a meeting in fifteen minutes and the other person doesn't realize it yet but you are there to break up with them. It won't survive 25 years in prison. I'm not sure it will survive 5. My context becomes old and stale; my memories start to blur and become less relevant anyway; I don't have new data to build more powerful intuitions and heuristics on; I don't have any well-founded impressions on anything that happened in the world after November 11th, 2022. Like Big Blue, waking up one day to find itself in the era of AlphaGo and ChatGPT, somehow not even able to beat a small handheld device at the only game it's ever known.

Meaning is different here. I'm an outie in an innie's world. There aren't many outies here; it's much more palatable to set your expectations in line with what you're actually going to get. And so for most people here, meaning means muffins. Your honor and dignity are worth 3 muffins (1 if you have the munchies); your pillow is worth 5 muffins, and your life's future is worth 20 muffins--or 1, if you have the munchies. People describe with reverence what it's like in better prisons--once a month you get a strawberry juice pack! it's cleaner! there's 'programming'--i.e. learning how to live a productive life from guards who don't realize that their current belief about the 'Hollow Earth' actually came from the movie series *Godzilla vs. Kong*.

There is no brisk cold breeze in 7-east, because there is no weather in 7-east; there is only one forecast, and that is 80 degrees and muggy with the faint smell of smoke. But, once in a while, I still feel it--that relief, that peace, that pure neutrality. Mostly, I feel it when I write.

Not when I write *anything*, of course; if I write a pile of shit, then I'm still in prison, but also copy-editing a pile of shit. But when I'm really inspired--and when I get lucky and the words fit together just right--sometimes I can distill some piece of myself and preserve it. I guess it's kind of like a horcrux, in a way--a piece of my soul, preserved in an external object, so that even if my mind withers away, some of its essence still exists. I think of it sometimes like a lateral pass: when one football player throws the ball slightly backwards, and off to the side, to someone else on the team--someone surrounded by fewer defenders--so they can carry it towards the end zone instead.

MDC, where I am now stuck, is generally regarded as the worst prison in the country. I am a few weeks away from going somewhere else which will be much better, everyone tells me. But

at MDC, I have a (locked down, no-internet, microsoft-word-only) laptop for roughly 30 hours/week. And the rest of the time--there's a discovery computer in our unit. It doesn't have Microsoft Office, and you aren't meant to be able to do anything but read files on it. But the PDF reader, we realized, has a text-box-note feature; and so I created 'blank_for_notes.pdf', a 35 page PDF that is completely blank (except for one quote at the very top: 'do not go gentle into that good night; rage, rage against the dying of the light'). It's midnight right now; the email-like-system and phones are shut off, laptops are returned, and there certainly are no legal calls or visits now. But I'm sitting at the 'discovery computer' with blank_for_notes.pdf open, writing this in a gigantic text box.

I won't become an innie--I refuse to, and anyway there's no point because I literally *can't* bring myself to enjoy the few earthly pleasures afforded prisoners. If I have to choose between access to a computer to work and strawberry juice packs or even sunlight, there's no contest. We filed our motion the other day asking for me to remain—while on appeal—in the worst prison in the country.

And as I finish this document, I feel some relief: another small slice of me, preserved. But not that much--there's still much more to write. I prod my mind to see what it's scared of forgetting, and a phrase comes back--'*how fickle we all are*'--about the trial and Ben and memory. The muses are getting pretty tired, so that will have to wait until tomorrow.

But at least some part of me has been preserved.

I remember my favorite webcomic--*A Softer World*. It ended a number of years ago. The homepage shows the most recent comic, and so the last comic they ever posted is still what pops up when you go to asoftworld.com:

The sun is shining

And the birds are singing

And because today is the very last day

They will sing forever.