BROTHER

a forum for men against sexism

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"WE ARE MEN. WE ARE NOT BEASTS."

The creation and destruction of the Attica Commune were very significant events in my life, though I have never spent much time in prison. As the black, brown, and white men inside Attica united to confront the institution that demeaned and exploited them, I was roused , by their exemplary brotherhood, from the deep depression I was feeling at the time. They were demonstarting that we could defy the limits of our existence; that I could break out of my sterile isolation.

I felt, as I did the first time I broke thru my defenses with a small group of men to a state of collective vulnerability, that brotherhood was powerful, possible, and good. They were reaching out with their solidarity to people outside the prison; and I responded to the assertion of their humanity, and to their demands for basic survival and dignity.



In confronting the prison, the prisoners transformed themselves. For four days, they democratically rationed their scant water, food, and blankets, sharing them with the guards they held hostage, with whom they