

There is a Difference . . .

. . . between being opposed to war
and being a soldier in a war. This,
allow me to suggest, is not hard even
for those of us who have never been soldiers
to imagine.

There is also a difference
between being opposed to prisons
and being an inmate in a prison,
something most of us who have never
been inmates can, it seems likely,
imagine too
without much difficulty.

What I had never imagined
until today, however, is the difference
between being opposed to prisons and
simply paying a visit to one.

Walk through the razor wire for yourself,
however, as I did, this morning (for the first time),
feel what it is like to observe just a fraction
of the regulations, for only a few hours,
that residents of this edifice are expected
to abide by strictly, twenty-four hours each
and every day, some
for the rest of their lives.

And I believe that you, too, will find yourself
searching for words that might, somehow,
help us to comprehend.

Steve Bloom
March 2014