

## PRINCESSES IN A GILDED CAGE

(Dedicated to the women in my Domestic Violence Life Skills group at  
Atkins House)

By Wendy Matarese

Not gilded  
But a cage nonetheless

You are getting ready to fly

You don't want to come back  
You don't want to look back

You want the last 7, 15, 20 years back  
You want your children back  
But you don't want that "dirty, rotten, son of a bitch" back

You are afraid to trust  
Why wouldn't you be

You look in my  
Eyes  
And ask questions  
That I am wholly  
Inadequate to answer

Or

You don't speak at all

Sometimes you are just plain  
Mad  
And your anger  
Addresses mine

Your stories rend my heart  
Your desire to start again  
Warms it

When you leave tomorrow, or next month  
Or next year  
I will miss you  
But, I hope to never see you here again

You have given me what you could and  
I have been graced  
By you