

FREEDOM. ONLY FREEDOM

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2017



Lemon

FREE POETRY, FREE VOICES: FREEDOM, ONLY FREEDOM

We would like to acknowledge that we live, work and write on the occupied lands of First Nations peoples and pay our respects to the elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the struggles of the aboriginal people who are refugees on their own homelands, and the on-going oppressions they face. This was, is, and always will be aboriginal land. Sovereignty was never ceded.

Arundhati Roy, the Indian activist and author, once said, “There’s really no such thing as the ‘voiceless’. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.”

The Free Poetry Project focuses on (<https://www.facebook.com/freepoetryproject/>) freeing the words of people currently in detention. The writing and poetry of those held in Australian detention centres, offshore and onshore, are works of art and expression in their own right, but are also critical forms of resistance and reporting.

Hidden Voices from the Human Dumping Grounds and the Free Poetry project have partnered to magnify the voices of people who have been deliberately silenced by the Australian government and the policy of mandatory detention. We hope that this booklet will help to spread these words.

These are the hidden voices of Australia’s political prisoners. These are the voices, locked behind walls and fences. The legacy of Manus, Nauru, Lorengau, Villawood, Yongah Hill, Maribyrnong, Christmas Island, Perth PIDC, Melbourne MITA, Brisbane BITA, Adelaide AITA, Woomera, Leonora, Curtin, Baxter, Wickham Point, Broadmeadows, Pontville, Port Hedland, Scherger, Inverbrackie

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

Acknowledge and act remembering that we live in colonised lands where sovereignty has never been ceded. This guides us to interrogate our actions and language.

- Get involved with RISE's #SanctionAustralia campaign: riserefugee.org/sanctionaustralia-what-can-supporters-located-in-australia-do/
- Write out these poems and place in public spaces, on bus seats, in cafes etc.
- Stick posters up around your community
- Use the shorter poems to make postcards to send to people this Holiday Season
- If you are a poet or artist commit to reading or presenting one of the Free Poetry poems prior to any performance you give
- Occupy the offices of politicians and read the poetry out loud
- Support artists in detention through readings of their work, organising exhibitions of their art, lob-bying radio stations to play their music, purchasing their art work. Remember that the use of words, music and art work of people detained should be with express permission from the artists and writers and according to their wishes
- De-invest from organisations that are profiting from and supporting immigration detention
- Occupy offices of those businesses who invest in mandatory detention such as Australian Border Force, Wilsons, Broadspectrum, Ferrovial, SERCO
- Attend rallies and occupy public spaces so to disrupt the day to day economic operation of cities and towns
- Lobby your local council to make a public statement demanding that Australia adhere to the UN Refugee Convention and that your town or city take a clear stance against the current policy
- Amplify the voices of these poets. Do not use their work to further your individual work

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Hidden Voices from the Human Dumping Grounds

Free Poetry Project

Writing Through Fences

HUMANITY

Nowadays, there is no foundation for the concept of humanity,
no understanding of humanity itself.

It's name remains from the past, and this is the only sign for humanity - its name.
The only sign of humanity is its name.

I'm staggered by human beings - they are social creatures.
I am staggered by the society that they have now formed.
Human beings and their societies stagger me.

I'm staggered by wickedness, by the wrong behaviour of humans.
Elders from the past were a guide for the demonstration of humanity.
They aspired to live well so to manifest the nature of humanity.
Wickedness and wrong behaviour now stagger me.

There is no longer any word for human or humanity.
The opposite only exists .
The description of humanity does not depend on any religion, race or ethnicity,
no, not the description of humanity.

You find humanity.

It's is not something to buy. It's achievable, it's obtainable, it's retainable.
I mean the name of humanity.

Turn on the luminous light of humanity now, today.
Don't be silent, and useless.
Don't draw back from the name of humanity.

The name human and humanity are valuable - an alchemist's gem.
Don't make the noble and great name disgraceful and contemptible.
Do your best to serve people, love them, be kind with them, until you are present;

until you live again under the glorious and magnificent name of humanity.

You recognize me from my words
You never see my self and meet me
I am a reality
I'm a real experience of pain
We are all a reality
Each of us different
Even us in here

*Kaveh. Writer.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau.*

BORN WITH NO HOMELAND

She says: write of your country's beauty, your lands, your rivers, your trees.

My body cells tremble.
Inside me a pain is groaning.
A storm is in my mind.
A volcano sears my heart
but silence controls me.
Dust, wars, dead bodies, weapons and women with no power,
children seeking water fill my mind.
While others extol their homelands with feelings of belonging,
great achievements, spectacular views,
nothing beautiful visits my mind-
not even a smile on a child's face.
People like me
can't say a word.
We were born with no homeland.
People like me
can't recall beautiful scenery.
We were too busy burying dead bodies.
We were born
with no skies, no stars, no moons.
The sun was there
but not for us.
We were born
with no relatives, no neighbours, no childhoods.
Air was there
but only contaminated air was ours.
I write: People like us don't need pity.
We are strong enough.
We are still alive.

I still cannot believe Australia government locked us up in this jungle.
Are we animals?

*Halhal. Civil war survivor, writer, social studies student.
Ex-detainee*

WE YELL OUT

In the heart of the dark nights, we yell out through the mass of metallic and hard fences.

Surrounded by agony and torture, we yell out right next to the tropical birds, in the heart of a remote island located in the corner of the vastest ocean.

In the name of humanity and freedom, we yell out, in the name of all the values - values that connect human dignity with peace. We yell out, a yell from the hell where people are tortured and systematically humiliated. A yell having the quality of those flower-like ambi-tions even when petals are being plucked cruelly, and a yell having the quality of a heart that has been crushed under the steel boots of politicians.

In the name of humanity and freedom, we yell out, in the name of all the values - values that connect human dignity with peace.

**We will never settle for anything less than freedom.
Only freedom.**

*Behrouz. Journalist. Writer. Filmmaker.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau*

WHO WILL CRY FOR THE YOUNG MEN

Who will cry for the young men
lost and all alone?
Who will cry for the young man
abandoned without his own?
Who will cry for the young man
who cries himself to sleep?
Who will cry for the young men
who never have their keeps?
Who will cry for the young men
who walk in burning sand?
Who will cry for the young men,
the boy inside the man,
Who will cry for the young men,
who died and die again?
Who will cry for the young men
tortured in detention?
Who will cry for the young men?
Good men they are trying to be.
Who will cry for the young men?
I cry inside of me.

Abdul Aziz.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau.

**We all long for special smiles, tender hands and soft lips.
We all long for love... that opportunity has been stolen from us.**

Walid. Writer.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

ON PEACE: A LETTER TO AUSTRALIA

I didn't run from my country to come and destroy yours.
I came here to join you because we both want the same peace.

I chose to run so they didn't use me for their criminal plans.
I didn't want to be victim to their goals.

I am here to be united with everyone who is seeking peace
so we can be more numbers than them.

All we want is a world of joy and peace but
that is not gonna happen if you don't start believing in me.

I made that choice
I came here without knowing if you would believe me or not,
if you would trust me or not.

No matter what the results are I will not regret that I have chosen to come here.

I will not regret

I have chosen peace.

Maya. Survivor

**We do not fix ourselves without truth and respect
Nor do we fix ourselves by breaking others.**

*Boush. Teacher
Held in limbo in Indonesia*

AN UN-PASSABLE BRIDGE

My heart with a hidden secret
and a world full of wounds in a jail
has no path to freedom.
It's been condemned to a sorrowful separation.

I wish there was a kind person to give a chance to this prisoner
Give him a smile again as a gift.
Let him free from fetters and alienation.
What a pity that it's all a dream!
My helpless heart has never seen bliss.
The jailer is bringing new chains to fasten.
This is a different prison
Oh, banish the sorrow of my unblessed heart.

I'm like an iron, you know, I am strong!

The white demons have arrived with anger
to promise another Reza's death.
They have sharp claws
They are roaring
The ground is wet from blood
though no-one has been killed yet.

They want a volunteer.
Someone like Reza Barrati.
Someone to be annihilated again.
The white demons are starving again.
They want to feed themselves with my own body
and celebrate until the next day.
They have no sorrow, no sadness, no pain...
There is no sign for humanity.
There are no rights for humanity.
Power is in the hands of wicked people.
They have made the world
an un-passable bridge.

Will I see freedom again?
My wings have become disabled in the cage of waiting.
The vision of my eyes can't see from behind the grid fences any more.
Hope and love are dying in my body.
I have become a stranger with myself.

*Thunder. Songwriter and musician.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau.*

MY SOUL

My soul once provided
Only tranquility
And it would not make my body impatient.
Now my soul's tenderness for my body
Has been forgotten.
My body is in tatters.
My soul follows
To notify you:
"I am talking about Freedom!
You throw me into the corners of your dark
shadows.
You put me into the very depths of exile.
The delicacy of my soul and body is no more
In this endless shadow.
If this continues any longer
I will not see anymore light
And my soul will be forever black".

Today is raining like days before
Sunshine is hiding from my heart like before
Flowers don't have smell like before
Everywhere is freezing no heating from the sun as before
My soul has gotten dark like my heart as before
Releasing a bird from a big cage to small like before
Hope always is stuck in disappointment like before.

*Farhad. Poet, musician, instrument maker, artist.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau*

TELL ME

My lord where am I?
Why am I here?
At least tell me what will happen to me!
Who chose this place for me?
Where should I go from this place?
Every kind of cruelty has been done to me.
At least tell me what will happen to me!
Why do they want to destroy my future?
Why don't they give me human rights?
I am helpless and they interfered with me.
At least tell me what will happen with me!
Is playing with the lives of humans their law?
Is experimenting on the children?
Can anyone tell me.
what will happen to me?

*Jajee. Writer.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Nauru*

**We are putting on a brave face so no one knows
how terribly frightened we are inside.**

Imran. Writer.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

THE GRIZZLED SKY

As a teenaged boy I remember when it was raining,
the moisture of soil smelt lovely.
When I grew younger the rains of our city had gunpowder.
But here, in the world of loneliness, the rain doesn't smell.
I only become very old and must continue my life under the grizzled sky...

Ali. Writer.
Held in limbo in Indonesia

**I am highly resilient.
You can take away my freedom,
You can remove my wealth,
But you can never take away my dignity.**

*Naeem. Reporter.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau*

FAREWELL

(written after Omid self-immolated on Nauru)

Goodnight my friend
This agony will never mend
You couldn't withstand anymore
Couldn't survive this burning

Hope you're resting in peace
And your soul has no more grief
I saw how quiet you slept
I dunno how many tears are left

Farewell,
farewell my friend
My pain,
my pain will never end
I wish this was all in jest
but something has broken
in my chest

You'll never wake up again
Not even with the sound of rain
So sleep in your dark grave
I'll see you in another place

Where only the dead are living
Where no one has any feeling
I can't explain my pain with words
Can't say how much I hate this world

Farewell,
farewell my friend
My pain,
my pain will never end
I wish this was all in jest
Something has broken
in my chest

Oh, There's no helper in the world
Not even the one they call Lord
I'm so numb from this burning cold
So,
goodnight my friend
my pain,
my pain will never end.

*Erna. Poet.
Political Prisoner on Nauru*

**It's enough it's really enough.
Open your hearts and minds
show some compassion for us.**

*Shamindan. Citizen Reporter.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau*

BELOVED MOTHER

Oh my beloved mother

I am missing you.

I am confronted with the Australian menace.

They have confined me in offshore detention without committing any crime.

I was not a terrorist, I came to find a safe haven for my very existence and for you.

Oh Mom, every night I weep and shed tears about those memories I had in your lap.

Your are my peace of mind and heaven is under your feet.

Every night I go through the nightmares caused to me by these tyrants.

Only your memories are keeping me alive.

In other words we have been turned into living deads.

You are the only ray of light in this bleak night after the almighty.

Oh mom, please come and get me in your strong and compassionate arms.

Please, come and give me comfort and strength through your ceaseless love.

Nazeer. Poet.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

We are not rocks for you to block the sea with.

Ghulam. Writer.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

MCANTO

I'm thinking of you mcanto
one day your life will turn around
your silence will make a sound
you will breathe fresh air
and you will speak loud
sing and roar louder than a lion
and those who imprisoned you will realize
they can no longer dumb your voice.

*Hani. Writer. Poet.
Ex-detainee*

You can kill me but you cannot kill my words.

*Boush. Teacher
Held in limbo in Indonesia*

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

You just leave, you are gone

When the dark day will finish
When the sun rising again
When the mouths open to breath
We will sings your songs

You just leave
You are gone.

Nazeer. Poet.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

They stayed for the hopes that were turned to desperation,
for the nights that we passed with sorrow,
for the heart that was squashed by the feet
of those that we loved,
for the eyes that stayed rainy forever.
One minute of silence
to respect those who have achieved happiness by persecuting us.
For honesty which is something completely forgotten,
for love which has been betrayed more than anything else.
One minute of silence for the untold stories
and for the feeling that we're always ignored.

*N. Ex-detainee.
Held on Nauru, 2015*

**Liberal, Labour lying to you
I'm not terrorist, I'm not perilous**

Moz. Musician.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

**We are alive and ready to not give up
no matter what my dear
Dying on our feet
rather than living on our knees.**

Omar. Diarist.

Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

**Silence breaks its silence
Setting free its songs
The shouts of sleepers
Releasing the voices of the voiceless
Screaming
“Freedom! Freedom!”**

*Farhad. Poet, musician, instrument maker, artist.
Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau*