

FREE POETRY PROJECT

RECITAL FREEDOM, ONLY FREEDOM

Welcome to everyone participating in this event. This event is centred around elevating the voices and work of those who are incarcerated in Australia's black sites.

This event has grown out of a collaboration between people detained and writers and poets who are free, as part of the Free Poetry Project that Writing Through Fences has been running over the past 9 months.

Below you will find an outline of the event.

You should choose the pieces you wish to read from the provided booklet. You may wish to use all of them or choose a few.

You will need:

- a) 5-10 readers
 - b) The Free Poetry Booklet
 - c) Outline
 - d) Posters (optional)
 - e) microphone on stand
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1. Should you wish you could begin the recital by playing some music from musicians detained. See below.
 2. We suggest that readers wear a dark colour for visual effect.
 3. Readers stand in a line, arms raised as in the Manus resistance sign facing the audience/street/gathering in sequential order of who is reading first, second etc etc
 4. There should be one person chosen to read the introduction (MC).
 5. This is followed by the first chorus - see below
 6. When readers are reciting their particular piece they should step forward from the line to the microphone, read, say the name of the author of poem/writing, step back and then the whole group chant the corresponding chorus (see below) with arms raised and crossed as in the Manus resistance sign. Take note that there are 2 Parts to the performance - (see below) The effect of this is that it builds the momentum through the performance so that by the end the energy of this performance is very affecting.
 7. End with FREEDOM, FREEDOM repeated.
 8. Let people know they can take booklets and posters or download from the Writing Through Fences website.

FREE POETRY PROJECT PUBLIC RECITAL: FREEDOM, ONLY FREEDOM OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION:

Music is played (approx. 5 mins) to attract people's attention and while people come to the location. Options:

- Moz – All the same (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq85x-In6Kf4>)
- Behrouz – song from Manus (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4xFm2tRoDY>)
- Farhad & Mostafa – Mey (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-W0wcQbW18>)
- Thunder, solo guitar piece written during the Siege

Poets assemble in a line, looking downward, arms crossed (as in the resistance sign) from Manus .

Music comes to a close

MC: We would like to acknowledge that we are gathering today on (traditional owner's) land, 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 ongoing 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."

Today, we are amplifying the voices of people who have been deliberately silenced by the Australian government and the policy of mandatory detention. What you are about to hear are the words that those responsible for this system would prefer to remain unheard. As part of the Free Poetry Project, we are bringing those words, those voices, to the fore, and we are hoping that anyone who is here and listening can continue spreading these words.

You will find some booklets, and individual posters, with poems on them. We encourage people to take these and share them. You may pass the poems on to a friend, or put a poster up in a busy place – the main point is not to let these words die. You will find a list of suggested actions on the back of the booklet, and a pdf version will be made available on the Free Poetry Project page for those who may want to download and print off their own copies.

PART 1

(Performance begins. Poets raise their arms and look at the crowd)

Chorus: These are the hidden voices of Australia's political prisoners. These are the voices, hidden behind walls and fences. The legacy of...

P1 calls out: Manus

P2 calls out : Nauru

P3 calls out : Lorengau

P4 calls out : Villawood

P5 calls out : Yongah Hill

P6 calls out: Maribyrnong

P7 calls out: Christmas Island

P8 calls out: Perth PIDC

P9 calls out: Broadmeadows MITA

P1 calls out: Brisbane BITA

P2 calls out: Adelaide AITA

P3 calls out: Woomera

P4 calls out: Leonora

P5 calls out: Curtin

P6 calls out: Baxter

P7 calls out: Wickham Point

P8 calls out: Pontville

P9 calls out: Port Hedland

P1 calls out: Scherger

P2 calls out: Inverbrackie

(All lower arms. P1 steps up to the mic)

P1:

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

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

(P1 reads bio and steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their heads)

Chorus:

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

(All lower arms. P2 steps up to the mic)

P2:

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.

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

(P2 reads bio and steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their heads)

Chorus:

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

(All lower arms. P3 steps up to the mic)

P3:

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 ambitions 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.

- Behrouz. Journalist. Writer. Film-maker. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau.

(P3 reads bio steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their heads)

Chorus:

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

(All lower arms. P4 steps up to the mic)

P4:

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. Human Rights Defender. Political Prisoner incarcerated on
Manus and now in Lorengau.

(P4 reads bio and steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their
heads)

Chorus:

Who will cry for the young men?
I cry inside of me.

(All lower arms. P5 steps up to the mic)

P5:

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.

(P5 reads bio and steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their
heads)

Chorus:

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.

(All lower arms. P6 steps up to the mic)

P6:

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.

-Thunder. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau.

(P6 reads bio and steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their heads)

Chorus:

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.

(All lower arms. P7 steps up to the mic)

P7:

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.

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

(P7 reads bio and steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their heads)

Chorus:

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.

(All lower arms. P8 steps up to the mic).

P8:

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

P8 reads bio above. Then says: the chorus is by Nazeer a poet on Manus and then steps back

Chorus:

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.

- Nazeer, poet. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus

(All lower arms. P9 steps up to the mic)

P9:

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.

P9 reads bio and then says:
Could everyone raise their arms in solidarity.

‘N’, poet held on Nauru, 2015.

(P9 steps back. All raise their arms crossed above their heads)

Chorus:
One minute of silence for the untold stories
and for the feeling that we're always ignored.

One minute of silence.

Invite audience to raise their arms and for all to join in one minute of silence.

PART 2:

(All poets stand in a line. The chorus will repeat each line after the main speaker says it)

P1 (steps forward, raises arms)

P1: You can kill me, but you cannot kill my words

Chorus: You can kill me, but you cannot kill my words

P1: Boush, a teacher in limbo in Indonesia.

(P1 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P2 (steps forward, raises arms)

P2: I am highly resilient.

Chorus: I am highly resilient.

P2: You can take away my freedom,
You can remove my wealth,
But you can never take away my dignity.

Chorus: You can take away my freedom,
You can remove my wealth,
But you can never take away my dignity.

P2: Naeem. Reporter. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

(P2 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P3 A (steps forward, raises arms)

P3: We are not rocks for you to block the sea with.

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

P3: Ghulam. Writer. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

(P3 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P4 (steps forward, raises arms)

P4: We do not fix ourselves without truth and respect
Nor do we fix ourselves by breaking others.

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

P4: Boush, a teacher in limbo in Indonesia

(P4 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P5 (steps forward, raises arms)

P5: We all long for special smiles, tender hands and soft lips.
We all long for love... that opportunity has been stolen from us.

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

P5: Walid. Writer. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

(P5 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P6 (steps forward, raises arms)

P6: Help us keep our sanity
Remember our humanity

Chorus: Help us keep our sanity
Remember our humanity

P6: Moz. Musician. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

(P6 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P7 (steps forward, raises arms)

P7: I've been looking for freedom since I knew myself

Chorus: I've been looking for freedom since I knew myself.

P7: Thunder. Writer and Musician. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

(P7 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P8 (steps forward, raises arms)

P8 : We are alive and ready to not give up
no matter what my dear
Dying on our feet
rather than living on our knees.

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

P8: Omar. Diarist. Political Prisoner incarcerated on Manus and now in Lorengau

(P8 moves to side, remains standing with arms raised)

P9 (steps forward, raises arms)

P9: Silence breaks its silence

Setting free its songs

The shouts of sleepers

Releasing the voices of the voiceless

Screaming

“Freedom! Freedom!”

Chorus: “Freedom! Freedom!” (repeat x 4-5)

MC: Thank you all for coming today, to listen to the voices of those who are locked away indefinitely in detention. As part of the Free Poetry Project, now we would like you to spread these words further. Do not allow them to be silenced. Please take posters and booklets and share them wherever you can. You will also find a list of other actions you can take at the back of the booklet. Thank you.

Music/Musician plays (same song from beginning)

END

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