



Poems from Guantánamo: The Detainees Speak

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Since 2002, at least 775 men have been held in the U.S. detention center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. According to Department of Defense data, fewer than half of them are accused of committing any hostile act against the United States or its allies. In hundreds of cases, even the circumstances of their initial detainment are questionable.

This collection gives voice to the men held at Guantánamo. Available only because of the tireless efforts of pro bono attorneys who submitted each line to Pentagon scrutiny, Poems from Guantánamo brings together twenty-two poems by seventeen detainees, most still at Guantánamo, in legal limbo.

If, in the words of Audre Lorde, poetry “forms the quality of light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change,” these verses—some originally written in toothpaste, others scratched onto foam drinking cups with pebbles and furtively handed to attorneys—are the most basic form of the art.

Death Poem by Jumah al Dossari
Take my blood.
Take my death shroud and
The remnants of my body.
Take photographs of my corpse at the grave, lonely.

Send them to the world,
To the judges and
To the people of conscience,
Send them to the principled men and the fair-minded.

And let them bear the guilty burden before the world,
Of this innocent soul.
Let them bear the burden before their children and before history,
Of this wasted, sinless soul,

Of this soul which has suffered at the hands of the "protectors or peace."

Jumah al Dossari is a thirty-three-year old Bahraini who has been held at Guantanamo Bay for more than five years. He has been in solitary confinement since the end of 2003 and, according to the U.S. military, has tried to kill himself twelve times while in custody.

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Editorial Review

Review

"At last Guantanamo has found its voice."--Gore Vidal

"Poetry, art of the human voice, helps turn us toward what we should or must not ignore. Speaking as they can across barriers actual and figurative, translated into our American tongue, these voices in confinement implicitly call us to our principles and to our humanity. They deserve, above all, not admiration or belief or sympathy-but attention. Attention to them is urgent for us."-Robert Pinsky

"Poems from Guantanamo brings to light figures of concrete, individual humanity, against the fabric of cruelty woven by the 'war on terror.' The poems and poets' biographies reveal one dimension of this officially obscured narrative, from the perspective of the sufferers; the legal and literary essays provide the context which has produced--under atrocious circumstances--a poetics of human dignity."--Adrienne Rich

Yochi J. Dreazen, *The Wall Street Journal*:

"Inmates at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, used pebbles to scratch messages into the foam cups they got with their meals. When the guards weren't looking, they passed the cups from cell to cell. It was a crude but effective way of communicating.

The prisoners weren't passing along escape plans or information about future terrorist attacks. They were sending one another poems."

Kate Allen, director, Amnesty International UK:

"The poems in this collection were written against enormous odds. The men detained in Guantanamo Bay are routinely held in solitary confinement, condemned without a fair trial, many of them tortured. Through it all, some have taken sanctuary in poetry, and through this small volume we hear voices and glimpse their innermost feelings. Their poems are a remarkable and moving testament to the power of the human spirit."

About the Author

Marc Falkoff is an assistant professor at the Northern Illinois University College of Law and attorney for seventeen Guantánamo prisoners. Flagg Miller is a linguistic and cultural anthropologist at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Ariel Dorfman is a Chilean American poet, novelist, playwright, and human rights activist who holds the Walter Hines Page Chair of Literature and Latin American Studies at Duke University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jerry Day:

The experience that you get from Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak will be the more deep you

excavating the information that hide inside the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to comprehend but Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak giving you thrill feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in selected way that can be understood by means of anyone who read it because the author of this book is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this specific Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak instantly.

Teresa Laureano:

The book untitled Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains her idea with easy method. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was written by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of time of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice study.

Michael Palmateer:

Is it you actually who having spare time then spend it whole day by watching television programs or just telling lies on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak can be the answer, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these textbooks have than the others?

Norma Ochoa:

A lot of guide has printed but it differs. You can get it by web on social media. You can choose the very best book for you, science, comedian, novel, or whatever by simply searching from it. It is referred to as of book Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak. Contain your knowledge by it. Without making the printed book, it may add your knowledge and make an individual happier to read. It is most crucial that, you must aware about guide. It can bring you from one place to other place.

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