



## Poems from Guantanamo: 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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