

*PIANO/VOCAL
SCORE*

The Prisoner
for tenor and 15 instruments

Karim Al-Zand
(2017/2023)

PROGRAM NOTE

The Prisoner tells the story of Adnan Latif, one of the first men imprisoned at the US Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp in 2002. Its text is drawn from Latif's own letters, sent to his lawyer while in captivity, and from other literary sources, including poems of Rilke, Al-Ma'arri, Rūmī and the Book of Psalms. Latif was unjustly imprisoned. Never charged with a crime, he was held at Guantanamo for more than ten years and endured daily torture and near constant abuse. Although cleared for release by several courts and military tribunals, he remained in custody until his death under mysterious circumstances in 2012. Latif's affecting letters were collected by human rights lawyer David Remes, and his poetry is contained in the 2007 anthology "Poems from Guantánamo." *The Prisoner* alternates the words of Latif, set to music in a dramatic narrative style, with songs reflecting on his tragic plight.

The Prisoner (2017) this version for ensemble transcribed 2023

Karim Al-Zand (b. 1970)

texts by

Adnan Latif (1974–2012)

Abul Ala Al-Ma'arri (973–1057)

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rūmī (1207–1273)

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926)

1. From this darkness
2. I am weary
3. This prison is a piece of hell
4. I wish my death would happen in a desert
5. I will be sent to a world
6. It's so long since I spent the night with you
7. This is my testimony
8. Before us stands great death
9. The cry of death
10. You left ground and sky weeping
11. Do whatever you wish

In late 2001 Adnan Latif travelled to Pakistan from his home in Yemen seeking affordable medical treatment. The 26-year-old had been experiencing neurological problems brought on by head injuries suffered in a car accident. In December Latif was caught up in a dragnet of young Arab men along the Pakistan/Afghanistan border, undertaken by bounty hunters in the aftermath of 9/11. In exchange for a reward, he was handed over to US authorities in 2002 and transferred to the newly opened Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp. While there, Latif was subjected to repeated and prolonged torture, beatings, psychological abuse and extreme deprivation. With other prisoners he participated in an extended hunger strike, during which inmates were painfully force-fed, and he attempted suicide on numerous occasions. Latif was held for almost 11 years without charge. According to documents, military tribunals had concluded multiple times that he posed no threat, and that there was no evidence to justify his continuing incarceration. He was cleared for release by officials as early as 2004 and again in 2007. A further court ruling in 2010 ordered the administration to "take all necessary and appropriate diplomatic steps to facilitate Latif's release." On each occasion his release was denied, first by the Bush administration and later, by the Obama administration. In September of 2012 Latif was found dead in his cell, the ninth prisoner to die at Guantánamo. An autopsy was performed but its results are classified. A year later his body was returned to Yemen, to his wife and now 14-year old son. Forty-one prisoners remain at Guantánamo today. President Trump has pledged to add to its prison population, Attorney General Jeff Sessions calling it "a very fine place."



The Prisoner

TEXT

LETTER ➤ From this darkness (Adnan Latif)

Do whatever you wish to do, the issue is over. From this darkness I can draw a true picture of the condition in which I exist. I am moving towards a dark cave and a dark life, in the shadow of a dark prison. This is a prison that does not know humanity and knows but the language of power, oppression and humiliation for whoever enters it. Hardship is the only language used here. It is evil without mercy. It is my life but who is going to leave me alone? Who is going to rescue me? Send me the one I love and save me!

SONG ➤ I am weary (from *Psalm 69*, 1-4; 14-15)

*I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.
Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head;
mighty are those who would
destroy me, those who attack me with lies.
Deliver me from sinking in the mire;
let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.
Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up,
or the pit close its mouth over me.
For the waters have come up to my neck.*

LETTER ➤ This prison is a piece of hell (Adnan Latif)

This prison is a piece of hell that kills everything, the spirit, the body. The first and last stop. The injustice and the torture that humiliates, wastes one's dignity. Anybody who is able to die will be able to achieve happiness for himself. He has no other hope except that. To leave this life which is no longer really a life, but death itself and renewable torment. Laying the body in the grave is better than laying it in the fire I am enduring. Do whatever you wish to do, the issue is over.

SONG ➤ I wish my death would happen in a desert (from *Two Epigrams on Death*, Abul Ala Al-Ma' arri)

*I wish my death would happen in a desert land
Where shimmering mirages mark no roads.
There I would die, all on my own, alone,
Be buried in unsullied virgin soil.

If after death the body kept its shape,
We might hope it would be revived again.
Just as a jug, emptied of wine, could be
Refilled, as long as it remained unbroken.
But, alas, all its parts have come undone and turned
To particles of dust swept by the winds.*

LETTER ➤ I will be sent to a world (Adnan Latif)

I will be sent to a world that is much better than this world. There, real life will live again, filled with complete happiness and absent all harassment. There, the air will clear, things will calm and I will relax and not see the world of evil people.

SONG ➤ *It's been so long since I spent the night with you* (from *Longing*, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi)

*It's so long since I spent the night with you.
My friends! You know how we were torn apart.
Love of my soul, where will we meet again?
Noon Sun! I need your brightness in my heart.
Hey! Full Moon! Blinding light that stuns all men!
So long deserted, I want none but you.
You were my Morning Breeze, who brought good news.
Seduce me now. Save me with love once more.
On that strange and fateful night
you will hear a familiar voice.
The euphoria of love will sweep over your grave;
it will bring wine and friends, candles and food.*

LETTER ➤ *This is my testimony* (Adnan Latif)

This is my testimony of death and consolation. A world power failed to safeguard peace and human rights and save me. I will do whatever I am able, to rid myself of the imminent death imposed on me at this prison. With all my pains, I say goodbye to you.

SONG ➤ *Before us stands great death* (from *Death* by Rainer Maria Rilke)

*Before us stands great Death
Our fate held close within his quiet hands.
When we lift life's red wine with proud joy
To drink deep of the mystic shining cup
And ecstasy leaps through all our being—
Death bows his head and weeps.*

LETTER ➤ *The cry of death* (Adnan Latif)

The cry of death should be enough for you. Do whatever you wish to do, the issue is over.

SONG ➤ *You left ground and sky weeping* (from *The Death of Saladin*, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi)

*You left ground and sky weeping,
mind and soul full of grief.
No one can take your place in existence
or in absence. Both mourn:
the angels, and the prophets —and this sadness
I feel has taken from me the taste of language,
so that I can't say the flavor
of my being apart. The roof
of the kingdom within has collapsed!*

LETTER ➤ *Do whatever you wish* (Adnan Latif)

Do whatever you wish to do, the issue is over.

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute
(doubles Piccolo)
Oboe
(doubles English Horn)
B♭ Clarinet
(doubles B♭ Bass Clarinet & E♭ Clarinet)
Bassoon
(doubles Contrabassoon)

Horn in F
Trumpet in C
Trombone

Piano
Harp

Percussion (2 players)
2 Suspended Cymbals (large, small)
Crash Cymbals attached to Bass Drum
Chinese Cymbal
Sizzle Cymbal
Tam-Tam
Bass Drum
Snare Drum
Xylophone
Glockenspiel
Vibraphone
Chimes
Triangle
Tambourine

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Contrabass

DURATION

ca. 28'

Originally commissioned by Richard and Diane Klein for the
Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music

Adnan Latif
(1975–2012)
Abul Ala Al-Ma'arri
(973–1057)
Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī
(1207–1273)
Rainer Maria Rilke
(1875–1926)

The Prisoner

for tenor and chamber ensemble

Karim Al-Zand
(b. 1970)

LETTER: *From this darkness* (Adnan Latif)

Very slowly, gently tolling ♩ = 48

Slowly; anxious ♩ = 52
frightened, at turns tense, fearful, terrified...

Do _____ what-ev-er you wish to do, the is-sue is

⑥ very slowly poco rit. – – Slightly Faster; foreboding ♩ = 56

o-ver- _____

English horn

From this dark-ness _____ I can draw a true pic-ture of the con-

13

8 - di - tion in which I ex - ist. _____ freely, ad libitum

Moderately; restless, urgent ♩ = 76

flutes & oboes

19

mp agitated
I am

22

mov-ing to - wards a dark cave, and a dark life, _____

gradual cresc. to m. 33

25

in the shad-ow of a dark pris-on,

28

becoming more and more frantic
a dark cave, a dark life, a

31

f dark pris-on, dark, dark, dark— *bursting out* Do what-ev-er you wish to do

34

decresc. the is - sue is o - ver.

38 *mf* *sub p*

This is a pris - on that does not know hu - man - i - ty

cresc. *sub p*

41 *cresc.* *sub p*

and knows but the lan - guage of power, op - pres - sion and hu - mil - i - a - tion

cresc.

44 *sub p*

for who - ev - er en - ters it.

decresc.

47 *mp*

Hard - ship is the on - ly lan - guage used here.

mp

50 *p* *pp* ad libitum

It is e - vil with-out mer-cy. It is my

(a tempo)

54 *mp* with more conviction

life, It is my life but who is go-ing to leave me a-lone?

58 *pp* *vulnerable* *pp* Slowly; pained ♩ = 66

who is go-ing to res-cue me? Send me the one I love and save me,

63 *poco rit.* *ad libitum* *p* *pp* *poco rit.* *ppp*

save me, save me.

SONG: *I am weary* (Psalm 69, 1–4; 14–15)

Slowly (in ♩.s); delicate, fragile but taught $\text{♩.}=46$ ($\text{♩}\text{♩}=138$)

68 *weary, then nervousness turning to dread, agitation, panic...*

73 *p tired, but summoning the strength*

85

God. *mp*
Those who

89

hate me— with-out rea - son— out- -num - ber the hairs on my head;

93

f might - y, — *mf*
might - y are those who would des-

96

- troy me, might - y, —

99

might - y are those_ who at - tack me with lies.

(mf) *f*

102

De - liv - er me, de - liv - er me from sink - ing in

mp

105

the mire; let me be de - liv - ered from my en - e - mies

decresc.

108

and from the deep, and from the deep wa - ters.

decresc.

poco rit. — — — slowly, ad libitum Slightly slower, accel. a — — —

111 *p* *pp*
 Let not the flood sweep o-ver me,—

115 — — — — — tempo $\frac{3}{4}$ *poco cresc.* *p*
 or the deep swal-low me up, — — — or the

118 $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp* $\frac{3}{4}$
 pit close its mouth ov - er me. — — — for the wa - ters have come

121 *mf* $\frac{3}{4}$ *mf* *decresc.*
 up, — — — come up to my neck. — — —

124 *(pp)* (hold as long as possible) attacca

(8va)

gliss. *pp* *niente*

LETTER: *This prison* (Adnan Latif)

128 Quickly; violent, powerful ♩ = ca. 86
in a furious rage, seething anger, determined to fight...

sub. ff *cresc.*

marcato 3 3 3 3

trumpets

131 *ff* *maniacal*

This pris-on is a piece of hell that kills ev-ry-thing,

8va

135 *in a rage*

the spir-it, the bod-y, the bod-y, the spir-it, the first and last, the first and last, the first and last

8va

138

— stop. The in - jus - tice and the tor - ture, the in - jus - tice and the tor - ture, that hu - mil - - - i - ates,

142

cresc.

Slightly slower; struggling *accel.* a — — — — — tempo primo ($\text{♩} = 80$)

145

f *frustrated*

This pris-on, this pris-on, this pris-on, this pris-on, that wastes

149

Slowly; a plodding march ($\text{♩} = 48$)

one's dig - ni - ty.

sub. p

sub. p

8vb

155 *p* $\text{—} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}}$
 A - ny - bod - y — who is a - ble to die

160 $\text{—} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}}$ will be a - ble — to a - chieve hap - pi - ness $\text{—} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}}$

164 rit. — — — — Slower; sorrowful $\text{—} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{3}{\text{—}} \overset{5}{\text{—}}$ *p*
 — for him-self. He has no oth - er choice, — no oth - er choice ex -

168 molto rit. — — Very slowly; achingly sad $\text{—} \overset{5}{\text{—}}$ *pp*
 - cept that. To leave this life which is no long - er, no long - er

171 rit. — — — — — ad libitum

real - ly a life but death it - self — and re - new - a - ble tor - ment.

mp

173

ff *cresc.*

176 Slowly; struggling mightily but emphatic ♩ = 60 *poco f > mp*

Lay - ing the bod - y — in the grave is bet - ter than lay - ing it — in the fire I — am en - dur - ing. Do —

180 Slower; determined, resolute ♩ = 52 rit. — — — — — attacca

— what - ev - er you wish to do, — the is - sue is o - ver.

mp *f*

SONG: Two Epigrams on Death (Abul Ala Al-Ma'arri)

Slowly, but with a lilt; shimmering quietly ♩=63

(184) wistful, daydreaming, daring to hope, but then fatalistic...

184

p

I wish my death would hap-pen in a

189

de-sert land where shim-mer-ing mi-ra-ges

192

mark no roads there I would die, all on my own,

mf

take time a tempo

196

all on my own, a-lone. I would be bur-ied, a-

p *mp*

(200) *cresc.* *rit.* — — — — — *meno mosso* *poco f*

-lone, in un-sul-lied vir-gin soil. If af - - - ter death the

(204) *take time* *poco a poco più mosso* *pp*

bod - y kept its shape, we might hope it would be re-

(207) *cresc.* *poco stretto* — — — — —

-vived a - gain. Just as a jug, emp - tied of wine, could be re -

(210) *ad libitum* *a tempo primo* *mf* *mp*

- filled, as long as it re - mains un - bro - ken.

(215)

mp

But, a - las, all its parts have come un - done and

(219)

turned to par - ti - cles of dust swept by the wind. *p*

(222)

poco più mosso stretto — — — — — (attacca)

LETTER: *I will be sent to a world* (Adnan Latif)

ad libitum (ca ♩ = 60)

hopeful, optimistic, dreaming of a better existence...

(224)

poco f *mf* *Slowly, quasi recitativo* (♩ = ca 42) *mp*

I will be sent to a world that is much bet - ter than this world, much

take time ad libitum (ca ♩ = 60) Slowly, as before (♩ = ca 42)

(227) *pp* *poco f* *mf*

bet-ter than this world.— There, real life will live a-gain, filled with com- plete hap- pi- ness

(231) *mp* *meno mosso*

and ab-sent all har-rass-ment. There, the air will clear, things will calm and I will re-lax

(236) *ad libitum* *p* *sub p* *f*

and not see the world of e- vil peo-ple.—

SONG: *Longing* (Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī)

Moderately; sincere, nostalgic ♩ = 80

(241) *melancholic, but also with the wistful happiness of reminiscence...*

(241) *mf*

246

sub. mp

mf

251

mf heavy-hearted

It's so long, so long

mf

256

since I spent the night with you. My friends! You know how

sub. mp

mf

sub. mp

261

we were torn a-part. Love of my soul, love of my soul, where will we meet

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

(265)

molto - - - Faster; exultant, spirited ♩=132
accel.

8 a-gain? Noon sun!

f

(269)

8 Noon sun!

(273)

(277)

subito
a tempo primo (♩=80)

8 I need your bright-ness in my

p

sub p

(280)

molto - - - Faster, as before (♩=132)
accel. *f*

heart. Hey! Hey! Hey! Full moon!

cresc. *f*

(285)

Full moon!

(288)

(291)

ff

294

, a tempo primo (♩ = 80)

p

Blind - ing light — that

sub p

297

mf

stuns all men! — So — long — de - sert - ed.

mf

300

I want none but you. — You were my morn - ing breeze,

303

who brought good news. — se - duce me, se - duce me now.

sub mp

307

Save me with love once more.

mf *sub. mp*

312

accel. - - - - - Slightly faster; flowing, entranced ♩=92

On that

mf *poco cresc.*

316

strange and fate-ful night you will hear a fa-

p

320

-mil-iar voice. The eu-pho-ri-a-

p *cresc. poco a poco*

323

of love, the eu - pho - ri - a of love will

326

f sweep, sweep o - ver your grave, *decresc.*

329

o - ver your grave; It will bring wine and *poco rit.*

332

a tempo *p* friends, can - dles and food. *attacca*

LETTER: *Testimony of death and consolation* (Adnan Latif)

336 *ad libitum* *mf* purposeful 3 *Slowly, quasi recitative* $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 42$
resolute, with flashes of frustration, anger, finally accepting...

This is my tes - ti mo - ny of death and con - so - la - tion.

339 *poco accel.* - - - - - $\text{♩} = 92$ *ff* furious *a tempo*

A world pow-er

molto cresc. *ff*

342

failed to safe-guard peace

345 *ad libitum* *sub. pp*

and hu - man - rights and save me.

Slowly, as before (♩ = ca 42)

348

mf

I will do what-ev-er I am a - ble what-ev-er I am a - ble

mf

♩ = 84 poco accel. - - - - - Quickly, as before ♩ = 92 a tempo

351

poco f *molto cresc.* *ff*

to rid my-self, to rid my-self of the im - mi - nent death

molto cresc. *ff*

354

im - posed on me at this pris - on

357

Slowly; placid, doleful ♩ = 48

sub pp *p*

361

p sorrowful

With all my pain_____ I say good-bye,_____

good - bye_____ to you._____

364

good - bye_____ to you._____

SONG: *Death* (Rainer Maria Rilke)

rit. - - - - -

Slowly; dark, filled with gloom ♩=44

dark and filled with gloom, suddenly elevated, finally resigned ...

367

Be - fore us stands great Death_____ Our fate held

370

p solemn

Be - fore us stands great Death_____ Our fate held

(372) poco più mosso rit. - - -

close with-in his qui-et hands,

(375) a tempo *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

When we lift life's red wine with proud joy to

sub p *cresc. poco a poco*

(378) allargando- - - - -

drink deep, to drink deep of the mys-tic shin-ing cup and

(381) più allargando - - - - - ad libitum

ec - sta-sy ec - sta-sy leaps through all our

ff *pp*

384 take time – – a tempo primo

be-ing— Death bows his head, _____

p

p

LETTER: *The cry of death* (Adnan Latif)

Moderately, quasi recitative ♩.=88

attacca defiant but then relinquishing control, exhausted...

f powerfully

387

bows his head and weeps. _____ The

f

392

più mosso

decresc.

cry _____ of death, _____ The cry _____ of death _____ should

rit. – – – – – Slowly; resigned ♩.=52

396

be _____ e - nough for you. _____ Do _____ what-ev - er you wish to do, _____ the is - sue is

p

p

SONG: *The Death of Saladin* (Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī)

Slowly; calm, steady ♩=84

attacca full of sorrow and despondency, in the end tranquil, serene...

400 very slowly poco rit. - *attacca*

o - ver. (in 2: 3+2)

pp

404 *pp* heartfelt

You left, —

408 *p*

— you left — ground and sky weep - ing, — You left, —

p

412 *mp*

— you left, — mind and soul full of grief. — No one can

416 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ (♩=56)}$

take your place in ex-is-tence or in ab-sence. Both mourn:

mp

420 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ (♩=84)}$

the an - gels and the pro-phets—

molto espres.

poco f

423

426 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ (♩=56)}$

mf

and this sad - ness I feel has

429

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ ($\text{♩} = 84$)

ta - ken from me the taste of lan - guage, so that

432

cresc.

I can't say the fla - vor of my be - ing a - part.

435

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ *f*

cresc.

The roof of the king - dom with - in has col -

LETTER: *The issue is over* (Adnan Latif)

438

Slowly, as before ($\text{♩} = 52$)

morendo

- lapsed! Do what - ev - er you wish to do, the is - sue is

441 *ad libitum molto adagio* Slowly, as before (♩ = 84)

445

448

morendo - - - - -

452

molto rit. - - - - - *Very slowly, gently tolling*
più rit. - - - - -