

Siding with the God of the Scriptures

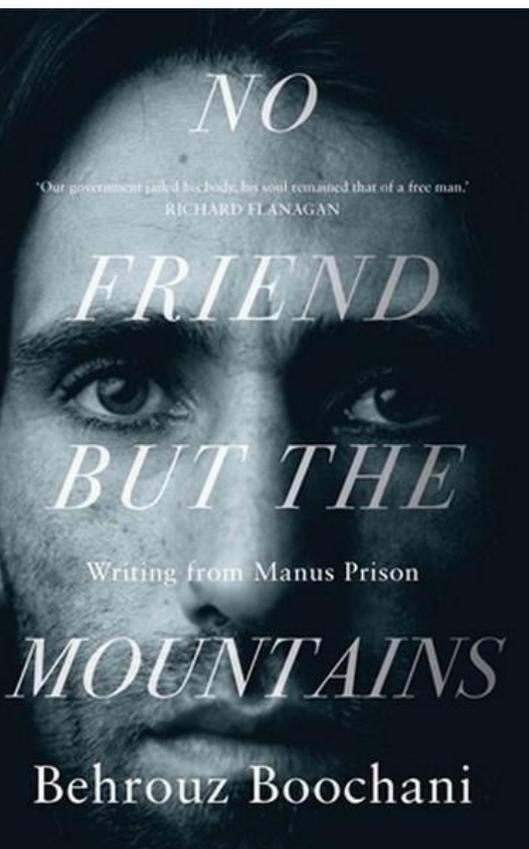
Begin by viewing the Youtube video 'Siding with the God of the Scriptures': <https://youtu.be/IJNOmeeyNec> with time for conversation to follow.

No Friend but the Mountains is a book that can rightly take its place on the shelf of world prison literature... The very existence of this book is a miracle of courage and creative tenacity. It was written not on paper or a computer, but thumbed on a phone and smuggled out of Manus Island in the form of thousands of text messages... The one thing that his jailers could not destroy in Behrouz Boochani was his belief in words: their beauty, their necessity, their possibility, their liberating power... Reading this book is difficult for any Australian. We pride ourselves on decency, kindness, generosity, and a fair go. None of these qualities are evident in Boochani's account of hunger, squalor, beatings, suicide and murder... This account demands a reckoning. Someone must answer for these crimes. Because if they don't, the one certainty that history teaches us is that the injustice of Manus Island and Nauru will one day be repeated on a larger, grander and infinitely more tragic scale in Australia.

Richard Flanagan, Forward 'No Friend but the Mountains'

*"In a relentless prison, even the most talkative and boisterous prisoners feel the need to seek isolation, to search for a quiet, removed place. I am glad that the prisoners don't crowd around the far-off sections and remote corners of the prison, that they don't feel the need to disrupt the relative tranquillity of this space. More importantly, they won't be coming to trample on *The Flowers Resembling Chamomile*. During the first days in prison there were flowers all around the fences and beside the grimy pipes of the kitchen. When the vegetation was wet, it felt as if the jungle had entered the prison. Within only a few weeks, the vegetation and the flowers were annihilated under the footsteps on men. With the disappearance of each flower or piece of vegetation, the prison appeared more barbaric and more brutal."*

*On rainy days the island has a different colour and fragrance /
When the rain pours down there is no sign of mosquitoes /
When it rains, one doesn't feel the heat that drenches bodies in sweat /
The Flowers Resembling Chamomile /
Dancing incessantly /
Breathing heavily /
Gasping as though in love with the cool ocean breeze /
I love those flowers /
A zeal for resistance /
A tremendous will for life bursting out from the coils & curves of the stems /
Bodies stretching out to reveal themselves for all to witness.*



Board & Stewardship Council Prayer 7.18

May you approach all other beings with Christ-like compassion, observing them with kindness. May you let go of all harsh judgements.

May you be aware of the suffering of those around you, and of all those in the cosmos. May your ears be open to hear their cries of distress.

May you have the courage and wisdom to speak up for those who are wronged, to be a voice for those who suffer from injustice of any form.

May you be open to receive from others when you are in need. May you be ready to give when someone needs to receive your gifts.

May you be willing to meet your own suffering. May you do so with deep compassion for yourself.

May your faith give you strength when you stand beneath the cross of another.

May you always know the shelter of God when you are hurting and in pain. May you trust this compassionate being to protect you and to comfort you. May you be at peace.

