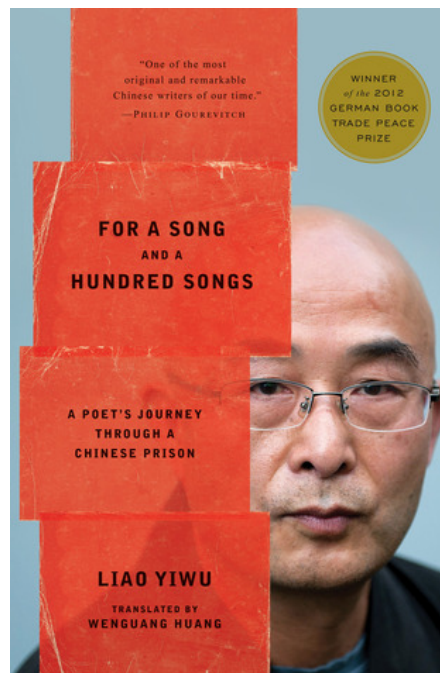




For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison

Liao Yiwu , Wenguang Huang (Translation)

Download now

Read Online ➞

For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison

Liao Yiwu , Wenguang Huang (Translation)

For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison Liao Yiwu , Wenguang Huang (Translation)

In the spring of 1989, news of the Tiananmen Square protests and their bloody resolution reverberated throughout the world. A young poet named Liao Yiwu, who had up until then lead an apolitical bohemian existence, found his voice in that moment, and, like the solitary man who stood firmly in front of a line of tanks, Liao proclaimed his outrage—only his weapon would be his words. Liao's memoir, *For a Song and a Hundred Songs*, captures the four dehumanizing years he spent in jail for writing the incendiary poem "Massacre." Through the power and beauty of his prose, he reveals the brutal reality of crowded Chinese prisons—the harassment from guards and fellow prisoners, the torture, the conflicts among human beings in close confinement, and the boredom of everyday life. Hailed by Philip Gourevitch as "one of the most original and remarkable Chinese writers of our time," Liao presents a stark and devastating portrait of a nation in flux, exposing a side of China that outsiders rarely ever get to see. This honest account and witness to history will forever change the way you view the rising superpower of China.

For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison Details

Date : Published June 4th 2013 by New Harvest (first published 2011)

ISBN : 9780547892634

Author : Liao Yiwu , Wenguang Huang (Translation)

Format : Hardcover 432 pages

Genre : Cultural, China, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Poetry, History, Biography

 [Download For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey T ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison Liao Yiwu , Wenguang Huang (Translation)

From Reader Review For a Song and a Hundred Songs: A Poet's Journey Through a Chinese Prison for online ebook

Louis Postel says

Forget the cover - the shaved head gives you the impression the author is a monk.

Hardly.

Liao Yiwu writes like Hemingway - He pulls you into these stories of hell right from the start - waking up like Yiwu did sometimes - with the stinky toes of the "Walking Dead" in his face - because there was no space in the cells to sleep - and it was his job to make sure the Walking Dead - the condemned - didn't kill themselves before their executions. starving, cattle prod beatings - and the worst - left behind by other Tiananmen Square rebels as China took to the Capitalist Road.

Very sad and surprisingly funny cover to cover.

Jenna Fisher says

Poet Liao Yiwu's account of four years spent in a Chinese prison is raw and disturbing yet also a deeply human and essential read.

The Chinese equivalent of a beatnik, poet Liao Yiwu was known to drink hard, get into fights, and seek out adventures, staying up late into the night with his artist friends to contemplate life. And that's all he cared to do.

But something snapped inside him upon hearing the news well past midnight on a sleepless June 4, 1989, that government troops would crack down on the tens of thousands of student protesters who had for almost two months come to lodge their peaceful protest across China, including in Tiananmen Square.

As the reality of what was happening hit him, as hundreds if not thousands of students were killed, Liao picked up a tape recorder, pressed record, and spoke two words into it: "I protest." It was the moment that changed the trajectory of his life, he says. That night, Liao recorded a poem called "Massacre," which the Chinese government would build a case around, calling it "a counterrevolutionary activity." His poem would land him in prison for four years of torture, starvation, and brutality.

(Read the rest of the review [here](#))

Aseem Kaul says

Liao Yiwu's *For a Song and a Hundred Songs* is an incredible book - brilliant and devastating, inspiring and humbling. The book recounts the years of his incarceration (for the 'crime' of writing and recording a poem in protest against the Tiananmen massacre), years that Yiwu describes in a way that is neither romanticized

nor self-righteous, allowing the specificity of detail to speak for itself. Solzhenitsyn is invoked a number of times, and it is no small praise to say that Yiwu's writing does not suffer by comparison; if anything Yiwu's work, being less structured and less strident with political conviction, seems more authentic.

For a Song and a Hundred Songs is a book everyone should read, not only for the rare glimpse it provides into the horrifying, emotionally excoriating reality of everyday prison life, but for an insider's view of the pathology of political repression, its all-pervasive invisibility. And as a reminder that we live in a world where writers and activists continue to be imprisoned and punished by dictatorial states; men and women who need and deserve not only our respect and our support, but also, and perhaps more importantly, our remembrance.

Riet says

Een indrukwekkend boek van een Chinese schrijver, die voor zijn gedicht over de massamoord op het Tian an Min plein in 1989 tot vier jaar gevangenisstraf werd veroordeeld. Ongelofelijk, zijn beschrijvingen van de Chinese gevangenen en zijn leven daar. Het is een rauw boek. Ik vond vooral de gedichten achterin erg mooi.

Alok says

A fascinating, addictive read. The protagonist is not a particularly sympathetic character, and the worst punishments are carried out not by the state but by fellow prisoners. However, I suspect if all prisoners were able to tell their stories, and more people within China read them, the system would get improved. I highly recommend if you want to understand better the human rights situation in China.

Tara says

After reading this book, I can definitively say that I don't want to go to prison in China. I can also say that I have some concerns about purchasing products manufactured in China, after reading about the prison slave labor. I did question the author's animosity towards his wife at the end of the book - it sounds like in addition to his time away from her in prison, he treated her pretty terribly before his incarceration.

Eapen Chacko says

Liao Yiwu could have been a prototypical hard drinking, womanizing fraternity brother on an American campus, but instead he got swept into the Tianamen Square protests, about which he wrote song lyrics that got him imprisoned for four years first on Song Mountain Penitentiary, the basis of the title. Liao has a great English translator, and the prose is simple, clear and engrossing. The story of prison life recalls those of the people in Soviet gulags.

China, Liao says, puts more people into its prison system each year than any country on earth, and yet we'd rather read about empty bullet trains "transforming" China than about the inhumanity that their totalitarian

system routinely unleashes on its citizens.

Even when the Chinese government decides to release Liao because he has come to international attention, he must sign a document admitting his guilt and absolving the government of any wrong doing. Although he resists with the heart of a poet and the mind of a stubborn person, he eventually succumbs, as we all would. It is a scene from Franz Kafka's world. This is a sobering and worthwhile read.

Stuart Chandler says

While I appreciate insight into life from an intellect's or artist's perspective, this book takes a different spin. Liao Yiwu found himself in an unanticipated connection with the student-drive political uprising in China's Tiananmen Square during 1989. As a reader, you have the opportunity to consider how Liao thinks and participates artistically in the world. Upon being placed in a detention center and then prison, I found myself fascinated with the social structure, forms of interaction (both positive and negative), and the yearning for food and hope among prisoners. The book is organized primarily into a variety of vignettes that highlight the many themes of life within the detention center and prison. Liao tells the vignettes with clear perspective, almost as if you're sitting down and listening to multiple stories about life in prison. The stories are somewhat disconnected, yet they blend well together to create an interesting narrative and vision of life in prison. I could consider giving it five stars if there were more emotion from Liao's perspective. In his defense, his experience in the detention center and prison probably left him significantly drained of some inner sense of self and you can see how this writing is, in many ways, his attempt to reconnect with something that he may have lost within himself during his time in prison. I would not hesitate to suggest this to someone.

Whitney says

A must-read, life-changing book. Images of unimaginable brutality and suffering. The best and worst of humanity and the range of all human drama playing out between inmates inside the confines of a prison cell. Disturbing, funny, terribly sad. I will never think of modern China in quite the same way again.

Andy says

An awesome read. I bought "For A Song And A Hundred Songs:A Poet's Journey Through A Chinese Prison" after reading an excerpt in "Tricycle:The Buddhist Review". The small sample in the article was enough to get me curious. It's not a "Buddhist" book but instead "A Poet's Journey Through A Chinese Prison". It's a memoir of Liao Yiwu's life, from poet in China just before the Tienanmen Square protests, to his imprisonment for 4 years as a "counter-revolutionary" after writing 2 poems about the Tienanmen Square protests. The book is very well written and was very difficult to put down from the very first pages.

Sheri Fresonke Harper says

Intense personal memoir about a Chinese poet who wrote a personal response to the Tiananman Square

tragedy and then a second poem and worked with a number of poets to create a film about it. They all ended up in jail. As the primary writer of the poems and film, Yiwu spent more time inside, first in detention and held for longer than allowed, then in the detention center awaiting his trial which took 2 years. He then was sentenced for 2 more years at a labor camp.

What was especially fascinating about this memoir was how it changed a selfish young man whom I didn't much care for into a mellow, wise poet with a lot to offer in terms of his experience.

This book, I think, serves as warning to Chinese to stay out of the legal system and behave, but also as a model that showcases a legal system vastly in need of respect for human rights and modernization.

Richard says

Liao Yiwu's prosaic language suits his descriptions of the Chinese criminal justice system, and reading this book was helpful as I read news about the Bo Xilai trial now underway.

I found it interesting that prisoners everywhere, regardless of the regime, organize themselves in similar ways and enforce similar hierarchies to maintain their own order and power. And what I found also particularly enlightening is how the brutal prison system fosters and encourages the brutality among prisoners. His frank description creates both shock and empathy.

John Pappas says

Liao Yiwu, a Chinese poet, chronicles his journey from diffident and politically apathetic poet to outraged and engaged activist because of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, and, further, his terrifying descent into the penal system as he is detained and arrested on charges of being a counterrevolutionary for a poem he wrote and a film version of the poem he helped make. The portrait of the Chinese prison system and "justice" system he depicts, and the violence and debasement, at both the hands of the state and the other prisoners, is shocking and horrifying. While his tone is maddeningly cold at times, on the whole, this is a profoundly affecting and extremely revealing memoir.

Chuck says

Liao Yiwu was a rather self-indulgent and apolitical poet prior to the Chinese military's June, 1989 massacre of protestors in Tiananmen Square. Learning of that news, however, Liao quickly became a protestor himself. He composed a poem, "Massacre", that was widely disseminated, and he followed that by participating in a commemorative film titled "Requiem". As might be expected, the Chinese authorities did not take kindly to these projects. Liao was arrested in 1990, and spent four years in prison.

For the most part, this book is an account of Liao's incarceration. Prisoners were routinely abused, not only by guards, but also by fellow inmates. Cells were organized hierarchically, with a "chief" ruler, various "enforcers", and newbie "slaves", and torture was commonly used to keep order and maintain the hierarchy. Readers who aren't irretrievably squeamish will find an extensive catalog of torture methods that Liao was able to recall from a prison booklet charmingly titled *Song Mountain's One hundred and Eight Rare Herbs*. Waterboarding is not included in the recipes, but many of the ones that are seem highly comparable.

Liao's narrative voice lacks the histrionics that his story might well justify, but his matter-of-fact presentation is no less effective for that. Although he describes horrific brutalities, those scenes are interlaced with moments of humor and surprising acts of kindness, generosity, and compassion. In some ways, his story is reminiscent of Mohamedou Ould Slahi's remarkable Guantánamo Diary, although Liao's outcome was somewhat more favorable: Following his release from prison, he escaped to Germany, whereas Slahi remains incarcerated by the United States government after 14 years, despite having never been charged with a crime, and having been approved -- on July 14, 2016 -- for release.

This book is a powerful indictment of Chinese political repression, although its message obviously applies to other regimes too. One small bright spot is that international pressure can sometimes have a positive effect on individual sentences, although that seems to happen only when a prisoner has attained some special notoriety. Unfortunately, the vast majority of political prisoners remain at the mercy of systems that are incapable of showing any.

Usagi says

Ich hatte zum Anfang Probleme dem Buch zu folgen. Was sich aufhob, als es losging mit den Verhaftungen und dem Rest. Zum Ende hin allerdings, war ich dann wieder etwas verwirrt um kam, warum auch immer, wieder nicht hinterher.

Sein Schreibstil ist flüssig, scher und dennoch gewöhnungsbedürftig.

Die Erinnerungen und all das was er erleben musste und durfte, zeigt immer wieder, dass man es an andern Stellen des Lebens einfach nur gut hat.

albionlady says

Masaker. Kniha so zúfalými a miestami veľmi krutými opismi "života" za mrežami. Najťažšie sa mi ťali ťasti z vyšetrovacieho a zadržiavacieho strediska: bez ohľadu na to, či ste vrah, zlodej, alebo politický väzeľ, ktorý napísal zopár protisystémových básní, tam sa rozdiely zotrú a všetci - či už dozorcovia, alebo, čo je horšie, spoluväzni - sa k vám správajú ako k najpodradnejším bytostiam bez akýchkoľvek práv. Mučenie v najhorších predstaviteľných podobách je na dennom poriadku. Trpieť môžete (presnejšie povedané *musíte*), zomrieť je zakázané. Tak podľa mňa vyzerá peklo na Zemi.

Lisa says

For a Song and a Hundred Songs It's not easy to read a prison memoir like this one: For a Song and a Hundred Songs, A Poet's Journey through a Chinese Prison by Liao Yiwu is a confronting book and it took me a while to get through it. It's a bit like reading Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich – one can't just scamper through it, because each chapter is a catalyst for all kinds of reflections about the power of the state ...

Liao Yiwu is the author of The Corpse Walker which I reviewed some time ago when Yiwu was about to visit Australia as the guest of the Sydney Writers' Festival. Until the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989, he had been an apolitical, somewhat bohemian poet, unknown to the west. However, the murder of the

protestors by the Red Army provoked his poem 'Massacre' and Yiwu rose to prominence as a dissident. He spent four years in prison for his temerity in challenging the Chinese government, and For a Song and a Hundred Songs, is his memoir of that time. (He is now resident in Germany, and free to write whatever he likes).

To read the rest of my review please visit <http://anzlitlovers.com/2013/08/18/fo...>

Kathy says

Not for the faint at heart, but a story that needs to be told.

Jana says

Księżka czytałam bardzo długo. Wynikało to z tego że opis pobytu w więzieniu jest przedstawiony bardzo szczegółowo. To opis okrutnych, poniżających, dehumanizujących praktyk więziennych. Rozumiem dlaczego autor zdecydował się na ten zabieg, wiem że wnosi on wiele do książki będącej uczciwym opisem pobytu w zakładzie, jednak dla mnie tak trudnym i wymagającym że lektura była istnym koszmarem. Podsumowując książka świetnie oddaje doświadczenie życia w więzieniu niestety mam za sobą nerwy na lekturę wyszukanych i okrutnych tortur oraz problemów z defekacją dotykających całe cele, które dominują nad 1 czy 2 cennymi spostrzeżeniami na temat poszukiwania sensu.

Matej Laš says

Takmer 500-stranová výpoveď z nehumánných čínskych zadržiavacích stredísk a z väzení z pohľadu kontrarevolucionára. Potvrdíte si, že najväčšie peklo sú iní ľudia, v tomto prípade spoluväzni, dozviete sa rozmanité spôsoby mučenia a mne doteraz neznáme účinky zubnej pasty na iný ako ústny otvor. Okrem beznádeje a prapodivných postavičiek z väzenia sa dočítate o najkrutejšej schizofrénii, keď sa človek v jednej chvíli správa v najnehumannejšom väzení ako Gándhi a o pár sekúnd na to ako Attila. Naopak, nedozviete sa veľa o historicko-kultúrnom kontexte číny v začiatku 90. rokov a budete musieť trpieť nie práve najsympatickejšiu (no nesmierne úprimnú) hlavnú postavu.
