

Note on İlhan Sami Çomak

Amy Dawn

Eothen gives great thanks to Caroline Stockford, poet herself and Turkey Advisor at Norwegian PEN, for translating and sharing İlhan's poetry.

The only company for İlhan Sami Çomak is a small pet bird. İlhan has written eight books of poetry from solitary confinement in Silivri Prison, Turkey's highest security facility. Still imprisoned for a crime that he was arrested for at the age of 22, İlhan remains as Turkey's longest-serving student prisoner.

İlhan was convicted of lighting a forest fire in the name of the Kurdistan Workers' Party and arrested in 1994. After nineteen days of torture, he then signed a confession and was originally sentenced to death. This penalty was since commuted to life and now İlhan has over two years remaining on his sentence.

He has always maintained his innocence.

İlhan's eighth published book of poetry won the 2019 Sennur Sezer Prize for Literature. His poems included in this issue of Eothen, are those which have been recently translated and put forward for selection for his ninth book of poetry that was published in Istanbul by Smokestack Books on the 1st of September 2022.

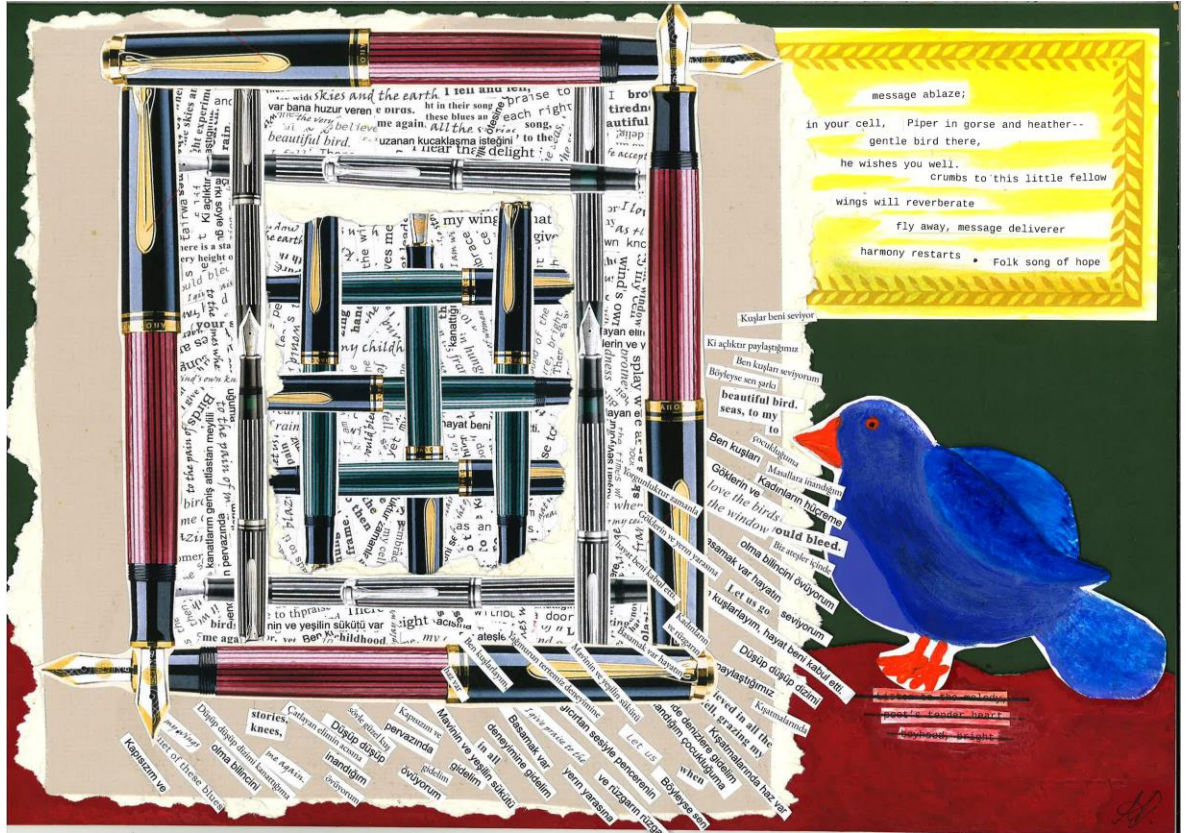


Photo: Folk Song of Hope for İlhan. Amy Dawn. 2022.