

DiTM – 07 His Poem_Omari Booker

Transcript of Audio from the Backstory Clip

[DiTM - Omari Booker - 07 His Poem.mp3](#)

00:00:02 If I were to say, you can only have one piece of artwork exist that says who you are and what's going on... I originally did this for the Florida Prison Education project. I wrote the poem in 2012 while I was incarcerated, and I did this charcoal drawing that same year. And I just made this larger piece in 2020. So I had that kind of time to sit with it. And I think also enough space from the really hard experience to get back into the difficult experience of kind of recreating that self-portrait [reads from the book]:

00:00:38

So this black bird.
This black bird lands on my window
The same bird every morning
I guess it's the same
All I've seen is its shadow
But it says hello every day, every morning
I fly away with my little black friend
Every day, every morning
My mind on its back
Free on its wings
Though I only see it through bars
We meet at the screen
It visits me every morning, every day
It brings me hope
It feeds my dreams
They're only bars, they're only screens
It's only tears, it's only screams
And to be born, we need these things
So for now, I guess I'm free
My little black friend
It visits me
Every morning, every day

Omari Booker, written in Charles Bass Correctional Complex, 2012. Used with permission.

00:01:45 I mean, of course, when I wrote it, it just felt like, you know, that's what, that was the transformation. You know, I'm free even though I'm here. And the bird really did come all the time. You know, it would come to the window. I couldn't really. I could see the

silhouette I was talking to the bird *and I was* the bird, you know? So it's like, so that's like I am the black bird. Yeah. There's a lot of lot of issues with the justice system. Just like there's a lot of issues with everything, that is that brings about pain and the flip side of that is pain can kind of always be a path to, you know, to something better so...

Links and Other Work by Omari Booker

Omari Booker Art:

<https://omaribooker.com/>

[Religion in the Arts Exhibition](#) at Vanderbilt Divinity School

Children's book:

The Dreams We Share by Alex Breene (author) and Omari Booker (illustrator), Hilliard Press, 2020. Also available in Spanish, *Los Sueños Que Compartimos* (Spanish Edition; Hilliard Press, 2021).