

The New York Review of Books

82 Sentences, Each Taken from the ‘Last Statement’ of a Person Executed by the State of Texas Since 1984

Joe Kloc
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a poem

Um, I don't know what to say. I am not as strong as I thought I was going to be, but I guess it only hurts for a little while. I sat in my cell many days wondering what my last words would be. I'm not going to shout, use profanity, or make idle threats. I am not going to play a part in my own murder, no one should have to do that. Can you hear me? This here is a tragedy. They are fixing to pump my veins with a lethal drug the American Veterinary Association won't even allow to be used on dogs. I should not have to be here. I'm not a killer. I know how it look but I didn't do it. I didn't kill my wife. I did not kill those drug dealers. I did not murder your loved one. I am sure he died unjustly, just like I am. I have done everything to prove my innocence. If I am paying my debt to society, I am due a rebate and a refund. Everybody has problems. I allowed the devil to rule my life. I was a kid in a grown man's world. I was sick, afraid, and looking for love in all the wrong ways. I messed up, made poor choices. But I am not guilty of this crime. I don't think the world will be a better or safer place without me. I hereby protest my pending execution. There are a lot of things that are not right in this world, I have had to overcome them myself. You know this ain't right. I don't know why all of this happened. I just played the hand that life dealt me. I understand that you wanted this day to come, you got what you wanted. I'm sure you think this is wonderful in your eyes. If this takes the pain away, so be it. Whatever makes y'all happy. I know you believe that you're going to have closure. The truth is that you are going to feel empty after tonight. A revenge death won't get you anything. Sooner or later every one of y'all will be along behind me. You will answer to your Maker when God has found out that you executed an innocent man. I wouldn't wish this on you. I forgive all y'all. It is all part of life, like a big full plate of food for the soul. Tell everyone I got full on chicken and pork chops. I am going to miss those pancakes and those old-time black-and-white shows. Sometimes it works out like this. I would like to tell my wife that I love her and thank her for all the years of happiness. I don't want to leave you baby, see you when you get there. To my kids, stand tall and continue to make me proud. Don't fight with each other. I know this is hard for y'all, but we are going to have to go through it. Don't cry, it's my situation. I'll be fine. I won't have to wake up in prison anymore. Don't be angry at what is happening to me. Enjoy life's moments because we never get them back. Yesterday was my birthday. Ain't life a bitch? Where's my stunt double when you need one? Oh, Lord. I am going home. I might have lost the fight but I'm still a soldier. I am taking it like a man, like a warrior. Preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Tell them I finished strong. Death before dishonor. With this let all debts be paid that I owed, real or imagined. Lord, send me a chariot. Hallelujah, holy, holy, holy. I guess that's it. It's my hour. Only the sky and the green grass goes on forever. I'm done. I have come here today to die, not make speeches. Warden, if you are going to murder someone, go ahead and do it, pull the trigger. Let's give them what they want. I'm ready when y'all are. Are they already doing it? I can feel it, taste it. My left arm is killing me, it hurts bad. Let me know that I will be in Heaven tonight, please let me know, I don't want to be in Hell with Satan or anyone else, please, that is something I need to know. I am starting to go. I am going to sleep now. *Begins singing: Amazing Grace.*

Below are the names and links to sources for each of the sentences in this poem:

1. James Clark, [executed on April 11, 2007](#)
2. Dominique Green, [executed on October 26, 2004](#)
3. Cleve Foster, [executed on September 25, 2012](#)
4. Napoleon Beazley, [executed on May 28, 2002](#)
5. Lamont Reese, [executed on June 20, 2006](#)
6. Bruce Jacobs, [executed on May 15, 2003](#)
7. Windell Broussard, [executed on January 30, 2002](#)
8. Reginald Blanton, [executed on October 27, 2009](#)
9. Robert Salazar Jr., [executed on March 22, 2006](#)
10. Rickey Lynn Lewis, [executed on April 9, 2013](#)
11. Stacey Lawton, [executed on November 14, 2000](#)
12. Keith Thurmond, [executed on March 7, 2012](#)
13. Gerald Tigner, [executed on March 7, 2002](#)
14. Jerry Martin, [executed on December 3, 2013](#)
15. Luis Ramirez, [executed on October 20, 2005](#)
16. Gregory Wright, [executed on October 30, 2008](#)
17. Billy Hughes, [executed on January 24, 2000](#)
18. James Colburn, [executed on March 26, 2003](#)
19. Angel Maturino Resendiz, [executed on June 27, 2006](#)
20. Beunka Adams, [executed on April 26, 2012](#)
21. Cornelius Goss, [executed on February 23, 2000](#)
22. Franklin DeWayne Alix, [executed on March 30, 2010](#)
23. Jesse Jacobs, [executed on January 4, 1995](#)
24. Jeffery Doughtie, [executed on August 16, 2001](#)
25. Douglas Feldman, [executed on July 31, 2013](#)
26. Adam Ward, [executed on March 22, 2016](#)
27. Ricky McGinn, [executed on September 27, 2000](#)
28. Guadalupe Esparza, [executed on November 16, 2011](#)
29. Willie Pondexter, [executed on March 3, 2009](#)
30. Richard Kutzner, [executed on August 7, 2002](#)
31. William Chappell, [executed on November 20, 2002](#)
32. James McCoskey, [executed on November 12, 2013](#)
33. Tory Clark, [executed on September 26, 2018](#)
34. Alvin Kelly, [executed on October 14, 2008](#)
35. Joseph Ray Ries, [executed on October 21, 2008](#)
36. Robert Ladd, [executed on January 29, 2015](#)
37. Thomas Mason, [executed on June 21, 2000](#)
38. Roy Pippin, [executed on March 29, 2007](#)
39. Arturo Diaz, [executed on September 26, 2013](#)
40. Leon Dorsey, [executed on August 12, 2008](#)
41. Quintin Phillippe Jones, [executed on May 19, 2021](#)
42. Michael Riley, [executed on May 19, 2009](#)
43. Billy Jack Crutsinger, [executed on September 5, 2019](#)
44. Marcus Cotton, [executed on March 3, 2004](#)
45. John Quintanilla Jr., [executed on July 16, 2013](#)
46. Tracy Beatty, [executed on November 9, 2022](#)
47. Wesley Ruiz, [executed on February 1, 2023](#)
48. Robert Garza, [executed on September 19, 2013](#)
49. Vaughn Ross, [executed on July 18, 2013](#)
50. Derrick Johnson, [executed on April 30, 2009](#)
51. James Edward Martinez, [executed on March 10, 2009](#)
52. Bryan Wolfe, [executed on May 18, 2005](#)
53. Johnny Conner, [executed on August 22, 2007](#)
54. Robert Mitchell Jennings, [executed on January 30, 2019](#)
55. Rosendo Rodriguez III, [executed on March 27, 2018](#)
56. G. W. Green, [executed on November 12, 1991](#)
57. Vincent Gutierrez, [executed on March 28, 2007](#)
58. James Moreland, [executed on January 27, 2000](#)
59. Kimberly McCarthy, [executed on June 26, 2013](#)
60. Erick Daniel Davila, [executed on April 25, 2018](#)
61. Elkie Taylor, [executed on November 6, 2008](#)
62. Khristian Oliver, [executed on November 5, 2009](#)
63. Lisa Coleman, [executed on September 17, 2014](#)
64. William Josef Berkley, [executed on April 22, 2010](#)
65. David Lee Goff, [executed on April 25, 2001](#)
66. Robert Moreno Ramos, [executed on November 14, 2018](#)
67. Frank Garcia, [executed on October 27, 2011](#)
68. Kent W. Sprouse, [executed on April 9, 2015](#)
69. Tommie Hughes, [executed on March 15, 2006](#)
70. David Martinez, [executed on March 7, 2023](#)
72. Delbert Teague Jr., [executed on September 9, 1998](#)
73. Steven Woods, [executed on September 13, 2011](#)
74. Melvin Wayne White, [executed on November 03, 2005](#)
75. Aaron Christopher Foust, [executed on April 28, 1999](#)
76. Rodrigo Hernandez, [executed on January 26, 2012](#)
77. Jesse Hernandez, [executed on March 28, 2012](#)
78. Jonathan Green, [executed on October 10, 2012](#)
79. James Richardson, [executed on May 23, 2000](#)
80. John Alba, [executed on May 25, 2010](#)
81. Rogelio Cannady, [executed on May 19, 2010](#)
82. Jermarr Arnold, [executed on January 16, 2002](#)

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