

Hessom Razavi – Failures of imagination



Hessom Razavi – the *ABR* Behrouz Boochani Fellow – offers a powerful reflection on the experiences that led to his family fleeing Iran to escape political persecution. Razavi examines the similarities between Australia's immigration detention centres and the political prison he visited as a boy. He wonders how easily the detainees' fate might have been his own.

In this moving article Razavi asks: 'How does our general acceptance of migrants sit alongside our harsh treatment of asylum seekers? Why are we among the few countries in the world that practise mandatory, indefinite detention of all undocumented – yet not illegal – non-citizens? With Australia's mental health rattled by six months of Covid-19's lockdown, can we begin to imagine the limbo and isolation experienced by asylum seekers, some of them incarcerated for up to ten years?'

Hessom Razavi's article is in the November issue of *Australian Book Review*.

About Hessom Razavi

Hessom Razavi is a writer and doctor based in Perth. He was born in Iran in 1976. In 1983 his family fled Iran to escape political persecution. He grew up in Pakistan and the United Kingdom before migrating to Australia when he was thirteen. He completed his studies as an ophthalmologist in 2015 and has visited Manus Island and Nauru in a medical capacity. He also writes poetry and essays, and he is currently working on his first collection.



Hessom Razavi

About the *ABR* Behrouz Boochani Fellowship

The Fellowship, worth \$10,000, honours the artistry, courage, and moral leadership of Behrouz Boochani, the award-winning author of *No Friend But the Mountains* (2018). The Fellowship is funded by Peter McMullin, a lawyer, philanthropist, and businessman.

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