“They have taken everything/ the pen/ the pencils/ the ink,” writes Armando Valladares, a political prisoner of Castro who fought against his regime. Although they have “taken everything” from Valladares, he continues to write his political discourses with “the best ink”: his blood. In his poem *La Mejor Tinta*, literally, *The Best Ink*, Valladares argues that the heart of the revolution is not only in the battles won or grand speeches given but, rather, it resides in the ideas and will of the people.

The blood in Valladares’ poem is both literal and figurative. Literally, his blood served as ink for writing the poem while he was imprisoned, and figuratively the blood represents his political ideas. Valladares mentions blood as the “ink of life” because it is the reason a heart is able to beat; in a similar way, ideas give motive to a rebellion. By writing this, from the cell of a prison, he gives life to the revolution. In the case of Valladares, his thoughts on liberty are just as powerful as any one action.

Valladares’ poem is more than a work about materials used to write. It is a declaration of the determination of the mind and soul. The poem demonstrates that actions retain less meaning without the ideas that motivate them. Blood, the irrevocable ink, represents something eternal from which the body, i.e. the revolution, is able to prosper. Recognizing this, Valladares realizes that liberty is more than space; it is “a garden of eternal flowers” that exists in the soul.