



Letters of love and hope

Letters of love and hope is a collection of letters and thoughts from and to the Miami Five and their loved ones. We've included a note from Gerardo Hernández to Adriana, and then her recollection of when they first met. The final extracts are from Olga's husband Rene González to daughter Irma – or Irmita as he calls her, and a quote from Olga.

Rose at a bus stop

For Adriana from Gerardo Hernández

Do you remember the first rose I gave you at the bus stop, 17 years ago? We were so young...

By Adriana

We met at a bus stop on Havana's downtown street, La Rampa. I arrived late and my friend and I managed to squeeze into one seat. Gerardo stood next to us and managed to start up a conversation with my friend, who told him we were chemistry students.

That day, we didn't exchange a single word, but the following day we ran into each other at the same bus stop. He appeared with verses: *Poem to the girl at the bus stop*. He didn't even know my name. On the third day, I left earlier to avoid him. On the fourth day he showed up very early. We started to spend time together as friends. A while later he invited me to go to the beach in Miramar – very near the institute of international relations, where he graduated as a diplomat.

"Look at the boat," he said pointing to the left. Indeed, there was a beautiful yacht on the horizon. "Look at that one," this time pointing to the right. When I turned my head there was a kiss waiting for me. "One boat over there, another over here... and you didn't want to leave Havana Bay," he used to say to me, laughing. Because from then on, the kisses never stopped.



Adriana Pérez

Laugh when you can

For Irma from Rene González

My dearest daughter Irmita

I still have here all the letters I've written to you and still haven't been able to send. Although we spoke with Roberto about the possibilities of putting them in your mothers luggage, we decided not to because we're not sure if there will be some restriction on her transporting documents when she's deported, and we don't want the letters to get lost.

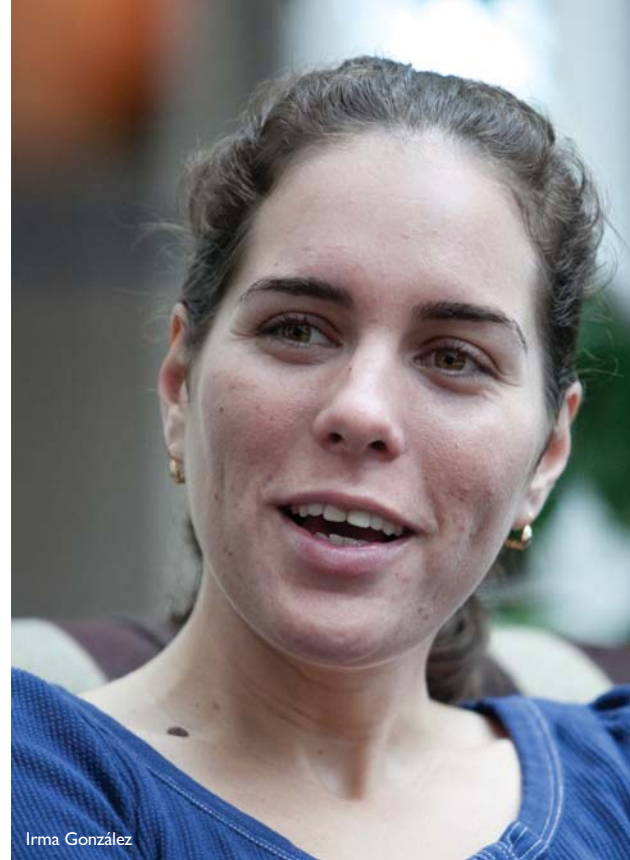
I also think it's a good idea for you to take the map you bought so you can put it up somewhere in the house and study it while you receive these letters and the others coming. As I said before, once the trial is over, we'll keep on with the geography lessons I promised you.

And also, don't forget your English and don't be embarrassed to read out loud every time you get a chance. It occurs to me that now that Ivette is going there you can practise English together. It can be like a game for her, and that way you'll help her develop the language.

Above all, the important thing is that you feel well and happy, that you take advantage of the time and don't miss a chance of either improving yourselves or relaxing. I don't want you to limit yourselves to thinking, "if daddy were here," or, "if daddy this or that." The only thing I need to know is that you are well, happy, that you feel useful and laugh about anything worth laughing about.

A kiss and all my love,

Your Daddy



Irma González

*'A kiss and all
my love,
Your Daddy'*



Olga Salanueva

Little brown bear

By Olga Salanueva

Ivette was two and a half years old. He carried her and kissed her. That was the last time he saw his child. She sleeps with a little doll Rene sent her from prison. It's a little brown bear knitted for her by another Cuban prisoner.

It has a little, white bag embroidered with Ivette's name and filled with feathers. Ivette says it's her brother. She named it Renecito.

• **Letters of love and hope** is available to buy from Cuba Solidarity.

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