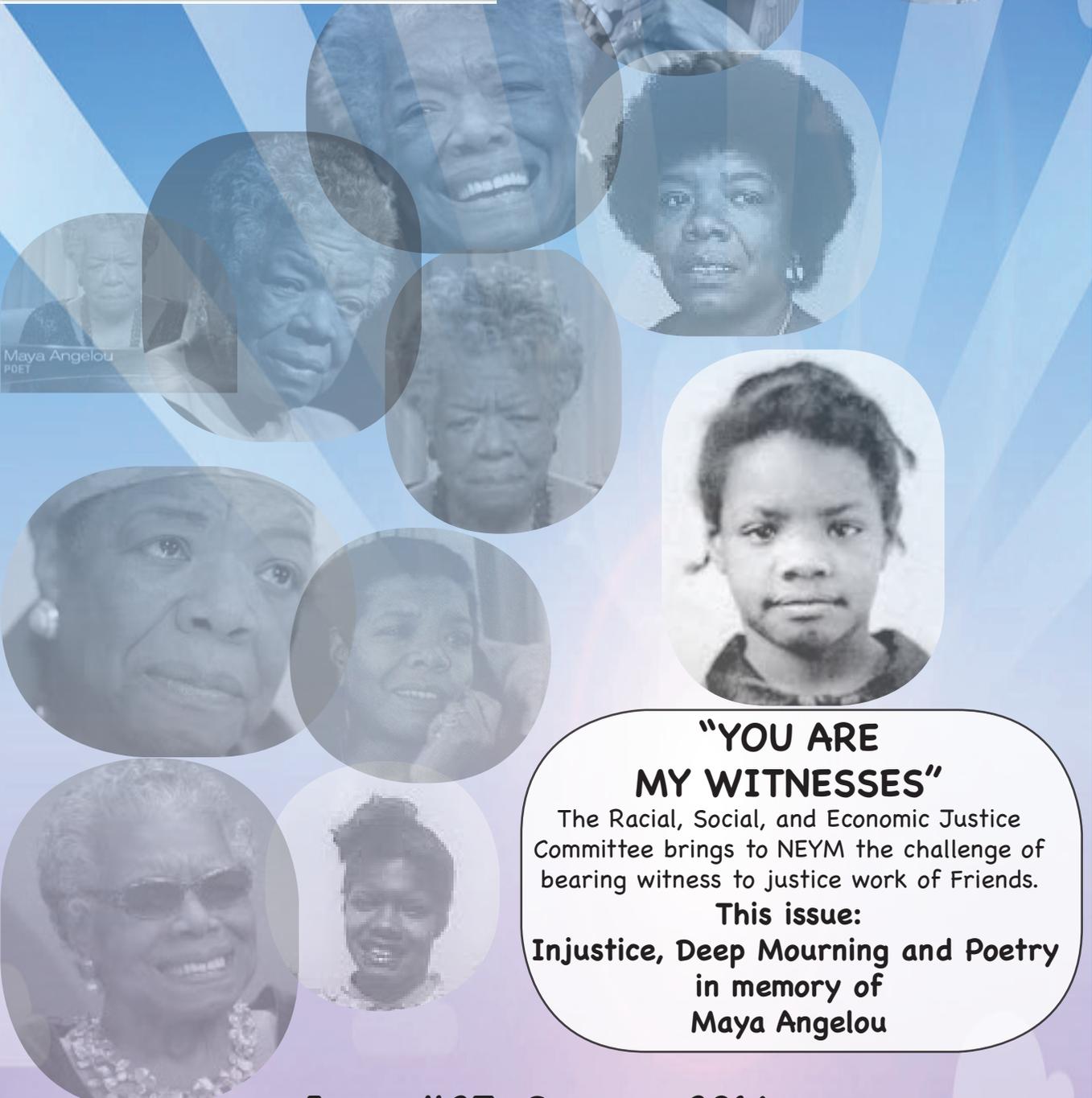


The Freedom & Justice Crier



Maya Angelou
POET

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES"
The Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee brings to NEYM the challenge of bearing witness to justice work of Friends.
This issue:
Injustice, Deep Mourning and Poetry in memory of Maya Angelou

Issue #27: Summer 2014



“Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.”

Maya Angelou, Celebrations: Rituals of Peace and Prayer



Issue #27: Summer 2014

PLEASE PASS THIS EDITION OF THE CRIER ON TO SOMEONE ELSE.
TAKE IT TO YOUR MEETING OR RETURN IT TO A MEMBER OF RSEJ.

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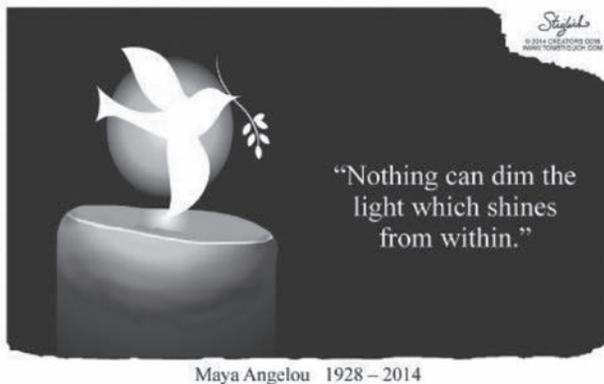
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See the Freedom and Justice Crier -- <http://www.neym.org/rsej/newsletter>

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A periodic newsletter from the Committee on Racial, Social & Economic Justice
 of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers)
 Editors: Rachel Carey-Harper and committee members

Leonard Pitts: Mourning Maya Angelou



Her most famous work took its title from "Sympathy," a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar. And it seems fitting, here after Maya Angelou's death at the age of 86, to recall some of what the poet said:

"I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore --
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings --
I know why the caged bird sings!"

It is not difficult to imagine why Maya Angelou saw herself in those words, and she chose "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings" as the

title of the celebrated 1969 memoir that would make her famous. Black girl, born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis to parents whose interest in her might best be described as sporadic, coming of age during the Great Depression, an early childhood in the soul-crushing segregation of tiny Stamps, Ark., raped as a child by her mother's boyfriend, rendered mute for years afterward by the experience, an unwed mother at 17, briefly and unsuccessfully a prostitute not long after that. Did circumstance and happenstance ever leave any bird more effectively caged?

And did any bird ever beat its wings against its bars to greater effect?

In the process, Maya Angelou created herself. Not that Angelou -- the first name was a childhood nickname bestowed by her older brother, the surname taken, slightly altered, from one of her husbands -- was unique in this. To the contrary, the history of American popular culture is liberally strewn with acts of self-creation, works of will by people who were able to imagine themselves beyond the limiting constraints of their lives.

But what makes Angelou different is not just the fact of her self-creation, but the depth and breadth of it. Indeed, a listing of her achievements and accomplishments is so long and so varied that at some point, if you didn't know better, you'd think somebody was pulling your leg. You'd think they were describing the work of two women. Or three.

... She was a playwright, a dancer and a Tony Award-nominated stage actress who toured Europe in a production of "Porgy and Bess." She edited an English-language newspaper in Cairo, edited another in Ghana. She was fluent in French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic and Fanti, a West African language. She was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama and held a reported 30 honorary degrees. She was an actress in film ("Madea's Family Reunion") and television ("Roots"), and directed the movie "Down In The Delta." She was a longtime professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. She once had a stage act with a young unknown named Alvin Ailey. She was a confidant of both Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. She considered Oprah Winfrey the daughter she never had. She was a spoken word artist and sometimes made music, too (her album "Miss Calypso" was released in 1957, and she recorded "Been Found" in 1996 with Ashford and Simpson).

And she was the "first Negro" hired to work on the streetcars of San Francisco.

All of that explains why, on the occasion of her death, she is being called a towering figure, an icon, a Renaissance woman and more. But none of it explains why that death seems to punch a hole in the ether, why the loss feels personal in a way no simple recitation of résumé highlights can quantify.

We will not miss her because of what she did. We will miss her because of what she was in our national life. Over and above the achievements there was to Maya Angelou a presence, a warm thereness that are simply not duplicated anywhere in American popular culture. Sometimes to certain African-American women, once they have lived enough, seen enough, endured enough, there comes a certain majesty, a serene formidability and regal grace that stem precisely from the realization that, having lived, seen and endured, nothing really frightens them anymore.

That was Maya Angelou. The voiceless rape victim grew up to inhabit a voice whose bigness and deep, honeyed wisdom taught and inspired generations. ...

It is the abiding triumph of her life that Angelou won both respect and acceptance -- and admiration and esteem, and even love. And that on bruised wings, a caged bird long ago soared free.

LEONARD PITTS, winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, is a Miami Herald columnist
<http://www.thenewstribune.com/2014/05/30/3218535/a-caged-bird-soars-remembering.html>



When Great Trees Fall

Maya Angelou

*When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.*

*When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.*

*When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks*

never taken.

*Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.*

*Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.*

*We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.*

*And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.”*





Equality

by Maya Angelou

You declare you see me dimly
through a glass which will not shine,
though I stand before you boldly,
trim in rank and making time.

You do own to hear me faintly
as a whisper out of range,
while my drums beat out the message
and the rhythms never change.

Equality, and I will be free.
Equality, and I will be free.

You announce my ways are wanton,
that I fly from man to man,
but if I'm just a shadow to you,
could you ever understand?

We have lived a painful history,
we know the shameful past,
but I keep on marching forward,
and you keep on coming last.

Equality, and I will be free.
Equality, and I will be free.

Take the blinders from your vision,
take the padding from your ears,
and confess you've heard me crying,
and admit you've seen my tears.



Hear the tempo so
compelling,
hear the blood throb
through my veins.
Yes, my drums are
beating nightly,
and the rhythms never
change.

Equality, and I will be
free.
Equality, and I will be
free.

Before War Is Declared:

What do you think we should do?

Susan Lloyd McGarry

I said, "Weep." Clearly she
doesn't think that's good enough
because she asks again. So,
I say, vigil and write
(letters, I mean, but could
be poems). She's still
standing there, waiting.
So I ask her What do
you think we should do?
And this seems the right answer.

Because now she's talking:
We can't go on
with our ordinary lives, we
have to strike, out in the
street, lie down in front of cars.
Otherwise, it's going to happen,
We are going to war. We
have to do this full-time, round
the clock. I wonder about her life,
she must not have a regular job, family.

But later, on the way home, I think
Yes, yes, the only way to stop it
is to stop.

The Lesson

by Maya Angelou

I keep on dying again.
Veins collapse, opening like the
Small fists of sleeping
Children.
Memory of old tombs,
Rotting flesh and worms do
Not convince me against
The challenge. The years
And cold defeat live deep in
Lines along my face.
They dull my eyes, yet
I keep on dying,
Because I love to live.

Talking About War

by Eric Wasileski

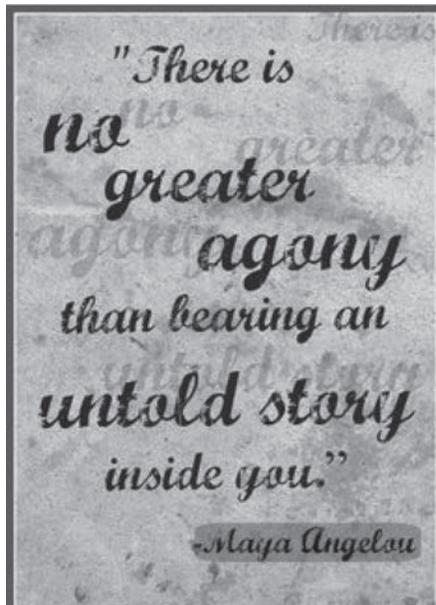
i want to tell you, but it is hard
you want to listen, but it is difficult
“it” stands between us
bringing us together
and driving us apart

i start by playing it safe
and telling only a small bit
you listen but after a while
i see your eyes glaze over
“it” is too much, you have disconnected
you care but can’t come to where i am
“it” stands between us

“i wish i could disconnect” i think to
myself
i can’t, i have to live with “it”
others try to live with “it” as well
22 suicides a day, nearly one per hour
homeless, addicted, incarcerated, divorced
we are a lost generation.

why did they send us over there?
it is really not fair
i tried to do what was right
but in the middle of the fight
i knew
in the fiber of my being
i knew "it" was wrong
that humans should not kill humans
but there I was doing “it”

society says it was honorable and duteous
my conscience informed me “it” was vile and evil
this inner conflict breaks us veterans
you want to know and I want to tell you
but neither one of us can



Glory Falls

by Maya Angelou

Glory falls around us
as we sob
a dirge of
desolation on the Cross
and hatred is the ballast of
the rock
which his upon our necks
and underfoot.
We have woven
robes of silk
and clothed our nakedness
with tapestry.
From crawling on this
murky planet's floor
we soar beyond the
birds and
through the clouds
and edge our waays from hate
and blind despair and
bring horror
to our brothers, and to our
sisters cheer.
We grow despite the
horror that we feed
upon our own
tomorrow.
We grow.

Mourning

Susan Lloyd McGarry

I am the body resting on the grass
and the roots of the tree,
turning the soil beneath that body.

I am that whole tree cultivated
for appearance while my fruit
rots into the ground.
I am the small ones
who crawl through that fruit.

I am the mourning dove
crooning in the dry branches.
I fly off to the willow.

And there I cry, and cry
for who, for who, for who.



I am capable of what every other human is
capable of. This is one of the great lessons of war
and life.

(Maya Angelou)

excerpts from Early Biological War on Native Americans -- Jeffrey Amherst and Smallpox Blankets

Peter d'Errico http://www.umass.edu/legal/derrico/amherst/lord_jeff.html

Lord Jeffrey Amherst was commanding general of British forces in North America during the final battles of the so-called French & Indian war (1754-1763). ...The town of Amherst, Massachusetts, was named for Lord Jeff even before he became a Lord. Amherst College was later named after the town. ...

Despite his fame, Jeffrey Amherst's name became tarnished by stories of smallpox-infected blankets used as germ warfare against American Indians. ...

The French and the Indians

The sharpest contrast with letters about Indians is provided by letters regarding the other enemy, the French. Amherst has been at war with the French as much as with the Indians; but he showed no obsessive desire to extirpate them from the earth. They were apparently his "worthy" enemy. It was the Indians who drove him mad. It was they against whom he was looking for "an occasion, to extirpate them root and branch." [J. C. Long, *Lord Jeffrey Amherst: A Soldier of the King* (NY: Macmillan, 1933), p. 187]... Perhaps most statesmanlike of all was Amherst's recognition of the French law, ... a recognition which permitted change of national loyalty without social upheaval. [p. 137]

In contrast to these kindly feelings, Long says that Pontiac's attacks on British forts at Detroit and Presqu'Isle "aroused Amherst to a frenzy, a frenzy almost hysterical in its impotence." Long then quotes from Amherst's letter to Sir William Johnson:

... it would be happy for the Provinces there was not an Indian settlement within a thousand Miles of them, and when they are properly punished, I care not how soon they move their Habitations, for the Inhabitants of the Woods are the fittest Companions for them, they being more nearly allied to the Brute than to the Human Creation. [p.186]

Colonel Bouquet's poetic line, "... every Tree is become an Indian," [63k] quoted above, was his description of a contagion of fear among soldiers and settlers, for whom the Indians were a part of the wildness they perceived around themselves. These warriors would not stand in ordered ranks; they fell back into the forests only to emerge again in renewed attack; their leaders defied British logic and proved effective against a string of British forts; these were the enemy that nearly succeeded in driving the British out, and became the target for British genocide.

Conclusion

All in all, the letters provided here remove all doubt about the validity of the stories about Lord Jeff and germ warfare. The General's own letters sustain the stories.

As to whether the plans actually were carried out, Parkman has this to say:

... in the following spring, Gershom Hicks, who had been among the Indians, reported at Fort Pitt that the small-pox had been raging for some time among them....

An additional source of information on the matter is the Journal of William Trent, commander of the local militia of the townspeople of Pittsburgh during Pontiac's seige of the fort. This Journal has been described as "... the most detailed contemporary account of the anxious days and nights in the beleaguered stronghold." Trent's entry for May 24, 1763, includes the following statement:

... we gave them two Blankets and an Handkerchief out of the Small Pox Hospital. I hope it will have the desired effect. Trent's Journal confirms that smallpox had broken out in Fort Pitt prior to the correspondence between Bouquet and Amherst, thus making their plans feasible. It also indicates that intentional infection of the Indians with smallpox had been already approved by at least Captain Ecuyer at the fort,

Amherst College china plates depicting mounted Englishman with sword chasing Indians on foot were in use until the 1970's.

HUNTING INDIANS IN MASSACHUSETTS: A SCOUTING JOURNAL OF 1758

ROBERT FRANCIS SEYBOLT

IN 1757, the Great and General Court of Massachusetts made a new resolution to rid the colony of the "Indian enemy." The bounty on scalps was increased from £250 to £300, a sum likely to inspire the needy as well as the adventurous.¹ Scalp-hunting was not only a sporting pastime: it was a profitable business.²

¹ *The Acts and Resolves of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1869-1922), III, 218 (passed October 14, 1744): bounty of £100 for killing and scalping an Indian.

Ibid., III, 342 (passed April 23, 1747): £250.

² A comparison of professional rewards in money may be of interest. See *Boston Record Commissioners' Reports*, XIV, 307-308 (Town meeting, May 10, 1757): "Voted that the Sum of One hundred and twenty Pounds be allowed and paid unto Mr. Peleg Wiswall for his Salary as Master of the North Grammar School for the ensuing Year . . . One hundred and twenty Pounds to be allowed and paid unto Mr. John Lovell for his Salary as Master of the South Grammar School the ensuing Year . . . One hundred Pounds to be allowed and paid unto Mr. David



Behind the Walls

by Judy Goldberger, Beacon Hill Friends Meeting

The Holy One, our Creator and Sustainer who loves us so much, weeps as we turn away from our sisters and brothers, Divinely Beloved. Anthropomorphizing? The Anguish that disturbs my heart is not my own, and it arises from a Love beyond mine.

In our county jail, I sit across the table from two neighbors who have been strangers to me. We're in the wing where men are detained by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (the aptly named ICE) after being ordered for deportation.

Antão* has a green card. At Christmas time, he flew back to Cape Verde to see his mother, who is dying. Upon his return to Boston's Logan airport, he was picked up by immigration authorities. It seems that as a teenager, over ten years ago, he struck another young man in self defense and was sentenced to probation. Antão, who works for a hospital, passed its criminal background check. In ICE's eyes, he is nothing but a criminal, marked for life for deportation.

Antão, the father of a two-year-old son, is sick with worry. How will my wife manage without her husband? How will my son know grow up to be a man without his father?

Hipólito*, the other man sharing the table tonight, introduces himself matter-of-factly: "You know how Paul says 'The good that I would do, I don't do, and the evil that I shouldn't do, I do'? That's me." He has been "getting into trouble" his whole life. His own father was deported to the Dominican Republic when Hipólito was ten years old. I ask him if that's when he started "getting into trouble." He replies simply, yes.

Sitting across the table from two neighbors, once strangers, I recognize two brothers, Beloved by the Holy One. "Father, meet your son," I hear. "Son, meet your father."

Over the next few weeks, I meet with Hipólito a few more



I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings

by Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps on the back of the wind
and floats downstream till the current ends
and dips his wing in the orange suns rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks down his narrow cage
can seldom see through his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings with a fearful trill
of things unknown but longed for still
and his tune is heard on the distant hill
for the caged bird sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the
grave of dreams his shadow shouts
on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings with a fearful trill
of things unknown but longed for still
and his tune is heard on the distant hill
for the caged bird sings of freedom.

"A significant number of youth migrating from Guatemala are from indigenous Mayan communities and are fleeing domestic violence, organized crime and poverty. Mayan youth speak up to as many as 21 distinct Mayan languages, and are from indigenous and rural settings and therefore require specialized attention, to include interpretation and translation in their language of choice and cultural understanding of Mayan culture and how that may affect the way they disclose information."
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

here. My heart, cracked open, overflows with the Holy One's Love.

Last night, after writing the first draft of this piece, it was my turn again to visit. Two of the men were teetering between despair and anger. They of course had children. One was about to miss the birth of his fourth, a daughter. A third man had been picked up two weeks after the birth of his son. One of the men asked us point blank, "You say you're here to listen, but what are you going to do? How is your life going to be changed?" My heart, yet again, cracked open.

In New England, we are "far" from the Border, "far" from Central American children fleeing the daily reality of violence fueled by drug cartels, children that some name "invading hordes." I haven't met these children, but I know they are brothers and sisters, know that they are Beloved, know that the Holy One is afflicted for each one who suffers and laments for our own ice cold hearts. And I know that the Border is in fact here, in New England. May our hearts be thawed open and be afflicted with the Holy One's Anguish. May our hearts be thawed open and become inflamed with the Holy One's Love. May our hearts be thawed open and pursue the Holy One's Justice.

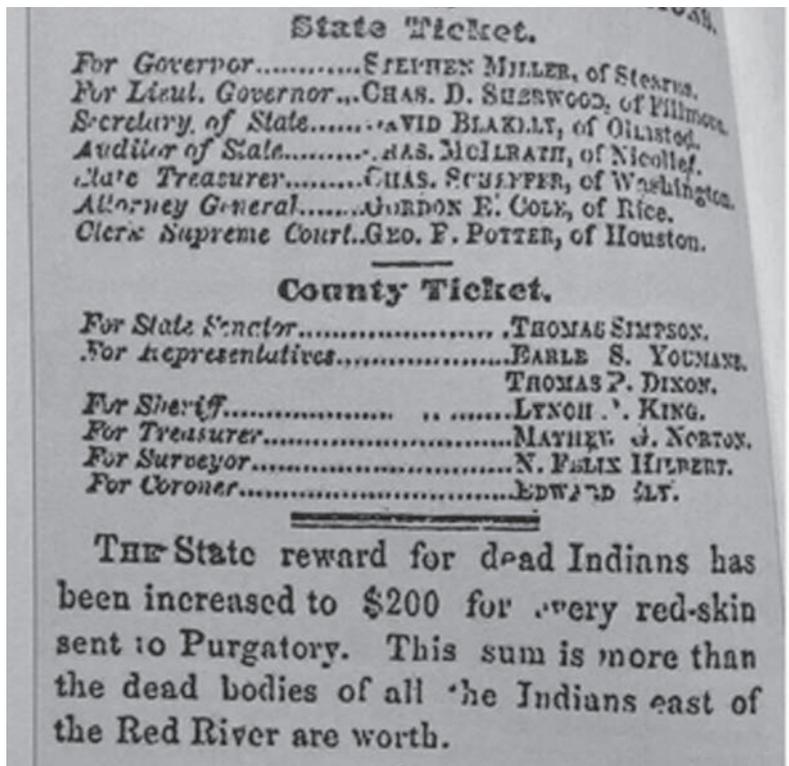
* All names have been changed.

"I fought through the War Between the States and have seen many men shot, but the Cherokee Removal was the cruelest work I ever knew."

- Georgia soldier who participated in the removal

times. He tells me more about his struggle to live a more virtuous life. Then, one evening, I hear from the

other men that he was deported. I never see Antão again. One of the other volunteers visits with JeanBaptiste,* another man who was also detained at Logan airport at Christmas time. He had made the trip to Haiti to see his grandmother, who is dying. We find out that JeanBaptiste was freed. I pray for Antão, for his son, for Hipólito. My heart, cracked open, trembles with the Anguish of the Holy One, distressed that our country takes fathers from their sons, that sons forced to grow up without fathers end up



An Invitation
to the workshop

A Journey of Healing:
a multi- year study on the Doctrine of Discovery

- Acknowledging a wrong
- making an apology
- Acceptance of the apology
- making amends
- moving forward together

NEYM has embarked on “a journey to consider the moral and spiritual implications of how we benefit from and have been harmed by the doctrine as individuals and meetings” (see Session 2013 minute 52). Indigenous leaders from New England facilitate and direct this work. Currently two different workshops engage Friends in this study about something that directly effects people here in New England

and our integrity as Friends. Workshop 1 and workshop 2 on our Journey of Healing are designed to get Friends to the point where, in a real way with facts and experientially, we can acknowledge the extent and levels of the harm. This also includes what is happening to native peoples TODAY in their own words and the direct role Friends have played while noting that Quaker intention was/is often quite different from outcome. Contact Rachel -- rch@cape.com for further info.



Still I Rise

by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard

'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame - I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain - I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear - I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear - I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.



***"However I am perceived and deceived,
however my ignorance and conceits,
lay aside your fears that I will be undone,***

for I shall not be moved."

- Maya Angelou



Brave and Startling Truth

by Maya Angelou

for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.

Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.

Yet it is only love
which sets us free.

A Brave and Startling Truth

We, this people on a small and lonely planet Traveling
through causal space

Past aloof stars, across the way of indifferent suns
To a destination where all signs tell us

It is possible and imperative that we discover

A brave and startling truth

And when we come to it

To the day of peacemaking

When we release our fingers

From fists of hostility

And allow the pure air to cool our palms

When we come to it

When the curtain falls on the minstrel show of hate

And faces sooted with scorn are scrubbed clean

When battlefields and coliseum

No longer rake our unique and particular sons and daughters

Up with the bruised and bloody grass

To lie in identical plots in foreign lands

When the rapacious storming of churches

The screaming racket in the temples have ceased
When the pennants are waving gaily
When the banners of the world trample
Stoutly in the good, clean breeze

When we come to it
When we let the rifles fall from our shoulders
And children dress their dolls in flags of truce
When land mines of death have been removed
And the aged may walk into evenings of peace
When religious ritual is not perfumed
By the incense of burning flesh
And childhood dreams are not kicked awake
By nightmares of abuse

When we come to it
Then we will confess that not the Pyramids
With their stones set in mysterious perfection
Not the Garden of Babylon
Hanging as eternal beauty
In our collective memory
Not the Grand Canyon
Kindled in delicious color By Western sunsets
Not the Danube flowing in its blue soul into Europe
Not the sacred peak of Mount Fuji
Stretching to the rising sun
Neither Father Amazon nor Mother Mississippi who,
without favor,
Nurture all creatures in the depths and on the shores
These are not the only wonders of the world

When we come to it
We, this people, on this minuscule and kithless globe
Who reach daily for the bomb, the blade, the dagger
Yet who petition in the dark for tokens of peace
We, this people on this mote of matter

***"Courage is the most important
of all the virtues because without
courage, you can't practice any
other virtue consistently."***

- Maya Angelou

In whose mouths abide cantankerous words
 Which challenge our existence
 Yet out of those same mouths
 Can come songs of such exquisite sweetness
 That the heart falters in its labor
 And the body is quieted into awe
 We, this people, on this small and drifting planet
 Whose hands can strike with such abandon
 That in a twinkling, life is sapped from the living
 Yet those same hands can touch with such healing,
 irresistible tenderness
 That the haughty neck is happy to bow
 And the proud back is glad to bend
 Out of such chaos, of such contradiction
 We learn that we are neither devils or divines

When we come to it
 We, this people, on this wayward, floating body
 Created on this earth, of this earth
 Have the power to fashion for this earth
 A climate where every man and every woman
 Can live freely without sanctimonious piety
 And without crippling fear

When we come to it
 We must confess that we are the possible
 We are the miraculous, the true wonders of this world
 That is when, and only when
 We come to it.

Today in New England, most Quakers are silent! I believe if we pray, if we struggle, if we worship deep! We will honor the call of a Justice Testimony, that we Friends can breath life into, by living deeply. I pray, way will open for all of us.

Greg Williams is a member of Beacon Hill Friends Meeting. He directs an independent Quaker Ministry, "Rail of Justice."

We are Called ,We are Challenged

by Greg Williams

We are called, we are challenged to move our lives forward. Can we as Quakers engaged in a spiritual adventure and move forward, in 2014? Can we as Quaker in the United States, really bear witness?



Rep. Louis 5th. Congressional District of Georgia posted a picture of himself a mug shot on the date that he was released from Parchman penitentiary in Mississippi, 53 years ago. He was arrested by police in Jackson Mississippi for, "using a so-called white rest room."

I raised a question for Quakers.

"Would we stand with John Lewis today, if it meant going to jail?" I think some of us would... I believe most of us would not? It is easy to spend time at a Yearly Meeting focused on "Witness!" But what happens when that Meeting ends? Do we just move on to the next year, a new topic? What happens to our witness?

Most of us know that what is happening to children from Central America, in part, lies in the hands of our nation. Our government, has made choices that has had a negative impact on a global world for generations!

Racial, Social and Economic Retreat -- Eden, Doctor Lords Rd. Dennis MA



~13~

To Maya Angelou

July 1, 2014

Dear Maya,

I want to thank you for the gift of your words and daily involvement with others every chance you got. You have given all your life in support of a world free of racism and discrimination. You have great concern for the scars of slavery in this country that are still evident in our daily lives as Black People! Let me tell you as a black man in this country, I know all too well the Pain of Racism, and as the father of three Black sons and one Black daughter, I live daily with the fear that they might some day be harmed or even murdered by some white person, a sick racist, as young Trayvon Martin was in Florida! It is sad, very sad, that the man who murdered Trayvon Martin is free today. Maya! Your powerful, but love-filled words help to turn some racist white people from hate to love and understanding that Black People deserve the same loving treatment that they want for themselves and their loved ones. You help them understand that skin is a thin covering, but underneath we are all alike. We are more alike than unlike as humans, and should be always treated the same! Your words also empower Black People to know we are as good as any other human being and have the ability to be as successful as any other human being if given the same chances, and we set our minds to doing it!

Former President William Clinton said you were the voice of God, and I think there is truth in his belief. Your talks and writing certainly express powerfully moving Godly messages that bring people together in very loving and magical ways. You have touched the lives of so many very important people, as well as people in general, in moving and special ways: Nelson Mandela, first Black president of South Africa, was a very great admirer of yours. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. confided and worked with you. I was there when you graced the August 1963 March on Washington DC for Freedom - Malcolm X was a great admirer of yours who counseled with you. - Oprah Winfrey called you her "mentor, mother, sister and friend." First Lady Michelle Obama says as a young black girl in Chicago, you were her inspiration, with your messages that helped her be the success she is today: a Princeton University graduate, lawyer, and wife of the first Black U.S. President, Barak Obama. Yes, you have admirers all over the world who are touched in loving ways by you and your powerful words that say we, as humans are more alike that we are unlike on this planet. We should embrace each other in loving ways every chance we get. I thank you for being a light of love in this world, and I am blessed to be touch by your love rays!

Love Sister

Your Brother James Varner
President Maine Human Rights Coalition, Inc.
Orono Maine Friends Meeting



The above letter is dedicated to my dear wife of more than 54 years, we were one in the same! Florence Ann Johnson Varner June 25, 1937 - April 19, 2009. Can you imagine spending more than 50 years together on the planet earth with the love of your life, pure joy and happiness. "We were together in Paradise on earth" Like Maya Angelou Florence was a writer, poet, singer and had that same passion for helping all mankind to walk the road of life hand in hand loving and embracing one another as family. She was a beloved wife, mother, musician and friend to all! She devoted her life to family. As a white woman married to me a black man in the 1950's she lived in a way, that big and small modeled Maya Angelou's vision of a loving world...

James Varner
Always her loving husband



Human Family

by Dr. Maya Angelou

Mirror twins are different
although their features jibe,
and lovers think quite different
thoughts
while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China,
we weep on England's moors,
and laugh and moan in Guinea,
and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland,
are born and die in Maine.
In minor ways we differ,
in major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences
between each sort and type,
but we are more alike, my
friends
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

I note the obvious differences
in the human family.
Some of us are serious,
some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived
as true profundity,
and others claim they really live
the real reality.

The variety of our skin tones
can confuse, bemuse, delight,
brown and pink and beige and purple,
tan and blue and white.

I've ailed upon the seven seas
and stopped in every land.
I've seen the wonders of the world,
not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women
called Jane and Mary Jane,
but I've not seen any two
who really were the same.



1
Guaman Poma, born in the
Andes,
wrote to the King of Spain in
1615:
If you knew
what they were doing
in your name, you would cry
such tears, enough tears
to cleanse the world,
to start again.
The King did not reply.

Empire and the King of Spain by Susan Lloyd McGarry

2
Brothers and sisters,
friends and children, neighbors:
if you only knew
what is being
done in our name,
the suffering, the hunger—
but you do know and so do I.
But we don't know
how to stop. And now
there's more talk of war.



Maybe if we really heard
the stories, let them
into our bodies, trembled
and writhed with them,
we would let our tears
fall and fall, we
would drown clean,
something might find a way
to start again.



Michelle Obama said at Maya Angelou's Memorial Service:

"She was the master. For at a time when there were such stifling constraints on how a black woman could exist in the world, she

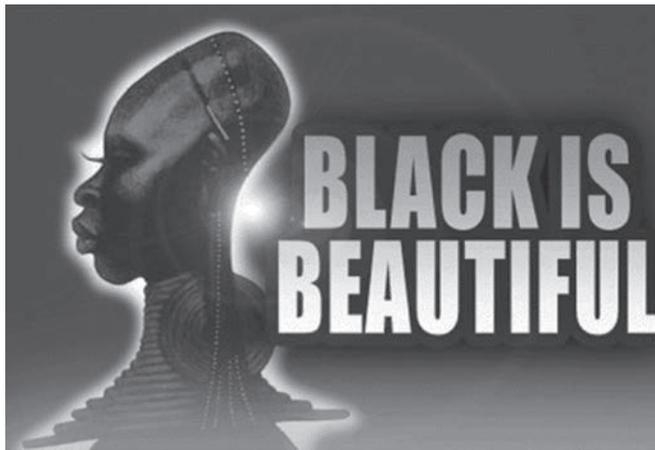
serenely disregarded all the rules with fiercely, passionate unapologetic self.

"Through lonely moments in ivy-covered classrooms and colorless skyscrapers, through blissful moments mothering two splendid baby girls, through long years on the campaign

trail where, at times, my very womanhood was dissected and questioned. For me, that was the power of Maya Angelou's words; words so powerful that they carried a little black girl from the South Side of Chicago all the way to the White House."



"She also graced us with an anthem for all women, a call to all of us to embrace our God-given beauty. How desperately black girls needed that message," the first lady said, remembering that as a young girl her first doll was a white Malibu Barbie. "We must each find our own voice, decide our own value and then announce it to the world with all the pride and joy that is our birthright as members of the human race."



"She was comfortable in every last inch of her glorious black skin. But for Dr Angelou, her own transition was never enough. You see, she didn't just want to be phenomenal herself. She wanted all of us to be phenomenal right along side her.



"In so many ways Maya Angelou knew us. She knew our hope, our pain, our ambition, our fear, our anger, our shame, and she assured us that in spite of it all, in fact because of it all, we were good.

"She touched me, she touched all of you, she touched people all across the globe, including a young white woman from Kansas who named her daughter after Maya and raised her son to be the first black president of the United States."



**“Nothing will
work unless
you do.”**



Touched by an Angel
by Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.
Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave

And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.



The past year since
our sessions in August
2013 has seen, not only
the passing of Maya
Angelou, but of other

great social justice leaders -Nelson Mandela,
Pete Seeger, actress Ruby Dee, Vincent Harding
and (tho' less known outside New England) Joel
Hayden, one of the founders of The Meeting
School. This, too, is the 50th Anniversary of
Freedom Summer - James Chaney, Michael
Schwerner and Andrew Goodman.

We recommit to our work in honor of them and
all those who witnessed before us, knowing that
we have been inspired by them. May we carry
their spirit forward to inspire those who will
continue the journey into the future.

~~Sheila Garrett





For the Sessions 2011 gathering RSEJ was asked to present part of the Plenary on the theme:

"Called to Heal a Broken World"

"We Friends need to work on ourselves, our families, our meetings", said one committee member. "You and I can begin to heal a sickness in our souls that leaves us unable to resist the need to control, to dominate. In order to start this healing process we invite Friends to mourn for the earth, mourn for the dreams that have been shattered by racism and other oppression." Committee member after committee member held up a sign one at a time that said

"MOURNING"

our FAILURE"

"to address RACISM"

"in NEYM"

"To continue this work", said another Friend, "we invite like minded Friends to join with us at 4:30 in the Friends of Color Room.

Another RSEJ member said "Now let's take a few minutes to reflect on the following queries. Copies will be given to anchor groups to consider them as led".

Do you reflect on your role of perpetuating systems of oppression?

How will the actions of you meeting appear from the perspective of seven generations from now?

What is your vision of a healed earth?"

At 4:30 in the room of color, as previously announced to all at a Plenary this was my experience:

Laughter in the halls,
Prancing footsteps,
A giggle

As I sat and mourned our failure to end racism in our religious society.

Tears made rivulets down my cheeks for at least 200 Quakers knew

We would be setting this time and space aside for

MOURNING our FAILURE to address RACISM

Yet I was alone.

Alone with the grief,

Deep sadness

For our brothers and sisters of color,

Indigenous surviving genocide

Those of African descent brought against their will

Enduring oppression within our Religious Society and in the outside world

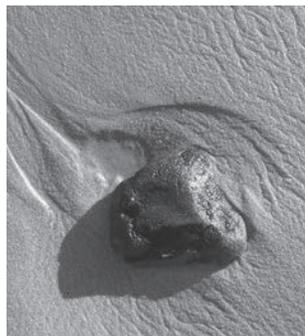
With no compassion, understanding

Or the comfort such shared awareness brings.

On the walls around this room set aside for Friends of color

Were pictures of famous black men and women.

Inspirational quotes, strong faces enfolds all who enter.



An anchor group had met there earlier in the day.

RSEJ had asked them to consider people in our family
Victims, survivors of racial oppression.

We had passed out sheets with queries to every group.

Instead all the anchor groups, even this one with those beautiful faces,
spent time on FUM policies.

So the tears fell cold and gentle

One by one,

One by one.

~ Rachel Carey-Harper

"Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible." ~ Maya Angelou

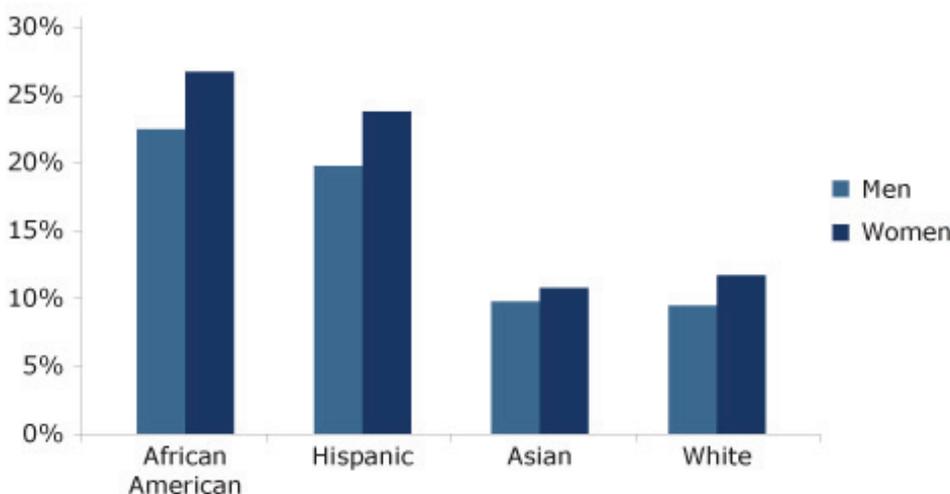
Application form for Prejudice and Poverty Fund grants:

- a) Projects for which P&P funds are requested should be consistent with the P&P mandate to address needs and concerns of organizations (and in exceptional circumstances individuals) who work to alleviate the suffering of segments of the U.S. population such as minorities, women, the poor, et. al., who struggle with damaging discrimination on the basis of race, culture, class, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, differing lifestyles, physical challenges, incarceration, poverty, homelessness, or some other characteristic not of their choosing.
- b) Most P&P grants are under \$1,000 and historically have not exceeded \$2,000.
- c) Except in unusual circumstances P&P moneys will be awarded as a one-time grant, and organizations are not encouraged to reapply for additional grants from P&P.
- d) Applications should usually reflect a project's consistency with Quaker beliefs in equality and community; in truth and integrity; in nonviolence, peace, and the denial of outward war; in simplicity, and in respect for the earth and the environment.
- e) Applications should provide the following information:
- i. Name of organization, address, phone number, email, and a contact person's name and information.
 - ii. A brief history of the organization
 - iii. A summary of the project to be funded.
 - iv. A background history of the project
 - v. A description of the organization's previous experience, if it has any, with the stuff of the project.
 - vi. Applications should reflect a conscious intention to avoid damaging patterns of charity by providing for administrative and feedback participation in the project by those being served by it.
 - vii. A proposed budget: Amount of the total budget, brief description of major items, total amount requested from P&P, and indication of other grants being sought or received.
 - viii. The P&P award committee will consider most favorably those projects with involvement of Friends (Quakers) and/or Friends' organizations, either as project organizers or as project recipients.
 - ix. Five hard copies of this application should be submitted to the clerk of the Working Party of RSEJ who will present the project and a recommended grant amount for approval of the full RSEJ committee of NEYM. Graphics and photographs are encouraged as part of these applications.

We've begun to raise daughters more like sons... but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters.

-Gloria Steinem

Percentage of men and women in poverty by race/ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*.

Please land mail completed applications to James Varner, 531 Brunswick St, Old Town, ME 04468-1926, (207-827-4493) or email to Shelby Grantham, shelby.grantham@dartmouth.edu (802-649-5142).

51 years ago the American Friends Service Committee was the first group to publish this letter "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr.

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

..... continues from last year's Crier

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion?

Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery?

Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment

to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber. I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.



You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of

the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle. If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies--a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides -and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist. But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

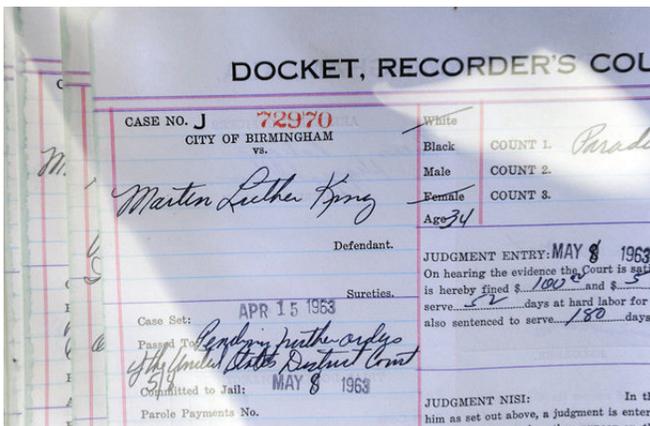
I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some -such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle--have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of



the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation. Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.



In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that

each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of

the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

There was a time when the church was very powerful--in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment. I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation -and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly

commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

...

Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood, Martin Luther King, Jr.

You must be careful about the words you use, or the words you allow to be used in your house. Someday we'll be able to measure the power of words. I think they are things. I think they get on the walls. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, and your upholstery and your clothes, and finally, into you.

~Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou, the nation's wise woman
Jesse J. Holland Associated Press

Maya Angelou walked into a meeting of civil rights leaders discussing affirmative action back in the 1990s, looked around, and put them all in their place with a single, astute observation.

"She came into the room," recalled Al Sharpton, "and she said: 'The first problem is you don't have women in here of equal status. We need to correct you before you can correct the country.'" Angelou, who died Wednesday at 86, made an impact on American culture that transcended her soaring poetry and searing memoirs. ...

And just like a mom, Angelou took the designers of the national memorial in King's honor to task for inscribing it with a paraphrased version of King's famous "drum major" quote. Doing so, Angelou said, made King sound like an "arrogant twit."

Two years later, workers sandblasted the quote away. Angelou declined credit for the change.

"The artists — the sculptor and the architect — had the right to put on their work what they wanted to place," Angelou said in 2012. "I am a friend of Martin Luther King and a mentee and so I had the right to say what I thought. That's all."



Angel: Maya Angelou

Your name has Angel in it
You were the Angel with me –
You are an Angel we can reflect on
You are an Angel of love –
You are an Angel showing us the way to Peace –
You are an Angel of togetherness
You are an Angel for "Yes, I am my brother's keeper and thankful to be that for thee!"
You are the Angel that lights the way for us to lovely follow life's road
Embracing one another hand in hand as members of one family –Mankind, the Human Race
with all the same needs and desires for the whole of Mankind, for each of us!
Do we all not want to be loved tenderly and give the same love back?
You are in a way gone but you –
You will never, never be forgotten.

By James Varner, who's life was touched by this Angel

Preacher, Don't Send Me

by Maya Angelou

Preacher, Don't Send me
when I die
to some big ghetto
in the sky
where rats eat cats
of the leopard type
and Sunday brunch
is grits and tripe.

I've known those rats
I've seen them kill
and grits I've had
would make a hill,
or maybe a mountain,
so what I need
from you on Sunday
is a different creed.

Preacher, please don't
promise me
streets of gold
and milk for free.
I stopped all milk
at four years old
and once I'm dead
I won't need gold.

I'd call a place
pure paradise
where families are loyal
and strangers are nice,
where the music is jazz
and the season is fall.
Promise me that
or nothing at all.

Maya Angelou read her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" at the first inauguration of President Bill Clinton on January 20, 1993. With her public recitation, Angelou became the second poet in history to read a poem at a presidential inauguration, and the first Black and woman.

When it was announced that Angelou would read one of her poems at Clinton's inauguration, many in the popular press compared her role as inaugural poet with that of Frost's, especially what Critic Zofia Burr called their "representativeness", or their ability to speak for and to the American people. The press also pointed to the nation's social progress that a Black woman would "stand in the place of a white man" at his inauguration, and praised Angelou's involvement as the Clinton administration's "gesture of inclusion". From Wikipedia

"On the Pulse of Morning"

by Maya Angelou

A Rock, A River, A Tree
 Hosts to species long since departed,
 Marked the mastodon.
 The dinosaur, who left dry tokens
 Of their sojourn here
 On our planet floor,
 Any broad alarm of their hastening doom
 Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages.

But today, the Rock cries out to us, clearly, forcefully,
 Come, you may stand upon my
 Back and face your distant destiny,
 But seek no haven in my shadow.

I will give you no more hiding place down here.

You, created only a little lower than
 The angels, have crouched too long in
 The bruising darkness,
 Have lain too long
 Face down in ignorance.

Your mouths spilling words
 Armed for slaughter.

The Rock cries out today, you may stand on me,
 But do not hide your face.

Across the wall of the world,
 A River sings a beautiful song,
 Come rest here by my side.

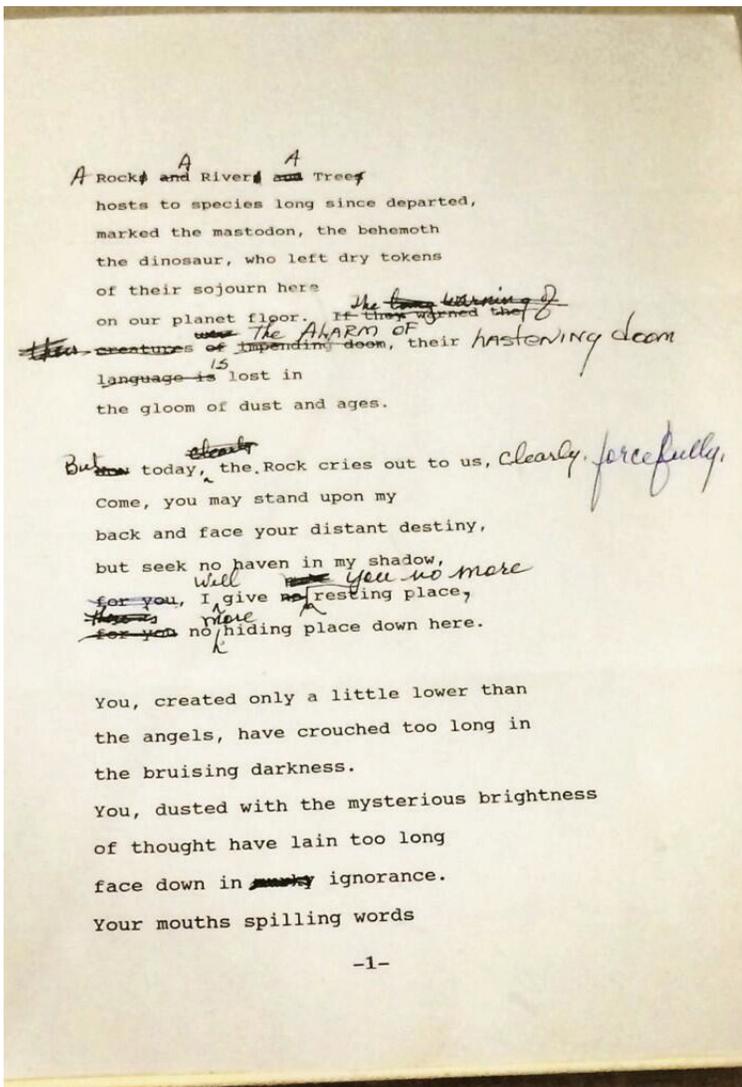
Each of you a bordered country,
 Delicate and strangely made proud,
 Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.

Your armed struggles for profit
 Have left collars of waste upon
 My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.

Yet, today I call you to my riverside,
 If you will study war no more. Come,

Clad in peace and I will sing the songs
 The Creator gave to me when I and the
 Tree and the stone were one.

Before cynicism was a bloody sear across your
 Brow and when you yet knew you still





Knew nothing.

The River sings and sings on.

There is a true yearning to respond to
The singing River and the wise Rock.

So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew
The African and Native American, the Sioux,
The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the Greek
The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheikh,
The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher,
The privileged, the homeless, the Teacher.
They hear. They all hear
The speaking of the Tree.

Today, the first and last of every Tree
Speaks to humankind. Come to me, here beside the River.

Plant yourself beside me, here beside the River.

Each of you, descendant of some passed
On traveller, has been paid for.

You, who gave me my first name, you
Pawnee, Apache and Seneca, you
Cherokee Nation, who rested with me, then
Forced on bloody feet, left me to the employment of
Other seekers--desperate for gain,
Starving for gold.

You, the Turk, the Swede, the German, the Scot ...
You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, bought
Sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare
Praying for a dream.

Here, root yourselves beside me.

I am the Tree planted by the River,
Which will not be moved.

I, the Rock, I the River, I the Tree
I am yours--your Passages have been paid.

Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
For this bright morning dawning for you.

History, despite its wrenching pain,

Cannot be unlived, and if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.

Lift up your eyes upon
The day breaking for you.

Give birth again
To the dream.

Women, children, men,
Take it into the palms of your hands.

Mold it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts
Each new hour holds new chances
For new beginnings.

Do not be wedded forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.

The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space to place new steps of change.
Here, on the pulse of this fine day
You may have the courage
To look up and out upon me, the
Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.

No less to Midas than the mendicant.

No less to you now than the mastodon then.

Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out
And into your sister's eyes, into
Your brother's face, your country
And say simply
Very simply
With hope
Good morning.



Recovery

by Maya Angelou

A Last love,
proper in conclusion,
should snip the wings
forbidding further flight.
But I, now,
reft of that confusion,
am lifted up
and speeding toward the light.

