

Let America be America Again

-Langston Hughes

Let America be America again. Let it be the
dream it used to be. Let it be the pioneer on the
plain Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers
dreamed-- Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty Is
crowned with no false patriotic wreath, But
opportunity is real, and life is free, Equality is in
the air we breathe.

*(There's never been equality for me, Nor
freedom in this "homeland of the free.")*

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark? And
who are you that draws your veil across the
stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart, I
am the Negro bearing slavery's scars. I am the
red man driven from the land, I am the
immigrant clutching the hope I seek-- And
finding only the same old stupid plan Of dog eat
dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,
Tangled in that ancient endless chain Of profit,
power, gain, of grab the land! Of grab the gold!
Of grab the ways of satisfying need! Of work the
men! Of take the pay! Of owning everything for
one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil. I am the
worker sold to the machine. I am the Negro,
servant to you all. I am the people, humble,
hungry, mean-- Hungry yet today despite the
dream. Beaten yet today--O, Pioneers! I am the
man who never got ahead, The poorest worker
bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream In
the Old World while still a serf of kings, Who
dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true, That
even yet its mighty daring sings In every brick
and stone, in every furrow turned That's made
America the land it has become. O, I'm the man
who sailed those early seas In search of what I
meant to be my home-- For I'm the one who left
dark Ireland's shore, And Poland's plain, and
England's grassy lea, And torn from Black
Africa's strand I came To build a "homeland of
the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me? Surely not me? The
millions on relief today? The millions shot down
when we strike? The millions who have nothing
for our pay? For all the dreams we've dreamed
And all the songs we've sung And all the hopes
we've held And all the flags we've hung, The
millions who have nothing for our pay-- Except
the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again-- The land that
never has been yet-- And yet must be--the land
where every man is free. The land that's mine--
the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME-- Who
made America, Whose sweat and blood, whose
faith and pain, Whose hand at the foundry,
whose plow in the rain, Must bring back our
mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose-- The
steel of freedom does not stain. From those who
live like leeches on the people's lives, We must
take back our land again, America!

O, yes, I say it plain, America never was
America to me, And yet I swear this oath--
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem The land, the
mines, the plants, the rivers. The mountains and
the endless plain-- All, all the stretch of these
great green states-- And make America again!