



OH SAY CAN YOU SEE?

*Litany authored by
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All: We the People of Black faith, in order to demand Recognition, establish Justice, incite domestic Agitation, provide Accountability to the militarized police, promote Holistic wellbeing and secure the promise of Liberation to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this litany in these United States of Amnesia.

Leader: Oh, say can you remember? That we did not land on Plymouth Rock. Plymouth Rock landed on us. Amerikkka envisioned and implemented physical and spiritual bondage for Black people for eternity and continues to manifest such captivity in new ages through Jim Crow, mass incarceration, gentrification...slavery by another name.

All: We shall never forget! The Black traditions of resistance by David Walker, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Denmark Vessey, Ida B. Wells, and countless others who have paved the way for us by not allowing oppression to have the last word about Black existence.

Leader: Oh, say can you hear? Faith cometh by hearing, hearing the word of God and the laments of God's people. The voices of the least of these are crying, screaming, protesting and even hashtagging blues provoked by a nation that regards Black pain as collateral damage in the quest for capital.

All: We shall never forget! The Blood of the Innocent Cries Out to Us. We hearken to these groanings and intensify their witness through mantras of #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName while doing the work of social, political and spiritual activism.

Leader: Oh, say can you sing? How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? How can we Lift Every Voice and Sing when our sorrow songs are appropriated for popular gratification? All the while athletes and singers are being persecuted for kneeling and raising fists to a national anthem that venerates liberty for some and servitude for others.

All: We shall never forget! Struggle does not silence our freedom songs. We chant with Black artists the hymns of our time: We Gon' Be Alright, For Us By Us, Glory, while fighting for equality for all and A Seat at the Table!

Leader: Oh, say can you feel? Who has empathy for those who grieve the loss of their lovers, parents, siblings, friends, and children? Who will advocate for those who are beaten, raped and sexually violated by relatives or strangers? Who will lobby for those sisters and brothers who face the perils of homelessness? Who will stand up for those who are underprivileged and overlooked?

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All: We shall never forget! In a society that pushes us to numb up and dumb down, we will mourn with those who mourn, rejoice with those who rejoice. We will advocate for the destitute, lobby for the disadvantaged, empathize with the distressed...feeling their pain and aiding in their healing.

Leader: Oh, say can you believe? We have been TRUMPED! A liberation hoped and fought for...has NOT been realized with the tenure of one Black President or the nomination of one woman. Transwomen are falling to hate and disappearing in the age of hypervisual media coverage. Sexual assault is being normalized under the auspices of “locker room talk”. Misogynoir receives Hollywood acclaim, in the midst of (Black)listing. Oil pipelines are drilled despite potential risks to drinking water and Native American artifacts. The construction of walls are designed for protection against the abject immigrant in the land of the free. Is this the dream?

All: We shall never forget! We have not been hoodwinked into believing that we live in a colorblind or post-supremacist society. We acknowledge that there is spiritual wickedness in high places and crafty evil systems of oppression that continue to subjugate women, criminalize dark skin, disparage queer folk, ravage the earth and exploit the poor. We will not be tossed by the roaring winds of injustice that seek to dismember and divide us.

Leader: Oh, say can you see? America’s domestically violent attacks against Black bodies captured by cell phone cinema, uploaded and televised as public lynchings serving as witness and fear. Can you see...the seductive charge in this day to make America great again carries the lie of exceptionalism that seeks to mark Blackness as less than human and less than equal?

All: We shall never forget! We’ve come this far by faith...in a God of Justice whom we trust. Faith in a God who affirms Black life as sacred. It is this Black faith that members us to pray, prophesy, profess, and protest for Black liberation until freedom rings all throughout this land.

Leader: Oh, say can you see your way to serve? Can you see and serve those left on the freeway of cracked vessels, broken promises, failed policies, weapons of mass distractions and nooses from sly foxes? Can you see and block those clear exits open for white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to drive up the fear factor and increase hate to preserve a gruesome greatness that loves some but hates most whether you are kneeling or standing? Can you see your way clear to take off the blindfolds of justice and work to make this country the land of liberty?

All: We shall never forget! Our power has always been in our ability to take information and get information. From the plantation to the Panthers, we have organized, mobilized and strategized for viable and sustainable change. We recognize that from the pyramids to the projects, from the outhouse to the white house we have been sustained by a power that dogs could not bite out, that water hoses could not spray out, that bombs could not blow out and that bullets could not shoot out. It is that love, power, faith and hope that calls us to stand up for divine truth and justice, to stand on the promises of a God of liberation and equality, to stand by those who when they were hungry we fed, when they were naked we clothed, when they were in prison we visited. We stand in anticipation still believing that we shall see the salvation of God’s glory in the land of the living. May God keep us in the path, we pray! Amen and Ase!