

Let America Be America Again

Marcus Miller

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!
Make America again!
Let America be America again