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Ashes

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Ashes

Abstract

There's silence as everybody waits to hear what we already know is coming, ears fixated on Robert McCulloch with hands over mouths, and our fears are validated. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, racial violence, prejudice, protest, peace

Disciplines

African American Studies

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

ASHES

December 1, 2014

There's silence as everybody waits to hear what we already know is coming,
ears fixated on Robert McCulloch with hands over mouths,
and our fears are validated.

Nothing.

And just like that Darren Wilson's bullets penetrate
everyone's glass-thin sense of security,
and the United States is flooded in gasoline tears
as the grand jury lights a match in Ferguson,
and now everyone watches what has sparked.

Wilson calls Brown a demon,
but on November 24th the world has seen Hell
and those condemned to burn in it,
and those that sit at home see that pain.

They condemn the judgment,
which seems to turn them into saints,
and under halos plead for peace
to fly on dove's wings to plant the olive branch
we will all hold together,
and they ask for peaceful protest.

"It's what Martin would have wanted."

Does anyone remember, though, when Martin said,
"A riot is the language of the unheard."
And what is it that America has failed to hear?"



How can you ask a community sprayed by fire hoses
as they stood in the river of their brothers' and sisters' open veins
to lower their tides?

How can you continue to ask them to keep singing
"We Shall Overcome" when the record has played for so long
the grooves have worn out?

When a system over 200 years old still doesn't have the sense
to serve justice to a family who's son was stolen,
how can you expect a silent response.

Anger bottled and shaken can only be expected to explode,
especially if hands have forced the cap to seal it in for so long.

And what about peace?

The dove can't see if the air is polluted in tear gas
and can't fly when its wings are clipped by rubber bullets.
Love is ideal but if it isn't reciprocal
is it really love at all?

They say fire is uncontrollable,
and once started will inevitably swallow the arsonist and all those around.
But sometimes the fire seems larger
when everyone's eyes are focused in
and they say it spreads through the forest
when in reality only a few blades of grass have burned.

It's awfully easy to ignore millions of hands joined together,
raising the temperature without melting the land
when ratings and views grow like poison ivy from the infertile soil
every camera glues its lenses to.

The blaze is miniscule but its heat rivals a volcano.

But while peaceful protests are the response
keep from your looks of disgust towards the few
because you are asking for trees to rise in trenches dug by tank tracks
after being stepped on by combat boots,
being watched behind sniper scopes.

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