

**The Dreamland\***  
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By Vijaya Sundaram

There was once a dreamer who had a dream,  
In whom the song of all the forebears flowed  
Unbounded in a visionary stream.

He spoke of the promised land, undeterred,  
The shining mountain-top to which he'd been,  
He spoke aloud, and claimed the dream deferred.

This land, this country, that's been ruled by might,  
He strove for it, for us, for those to come,  
To tilt the balance in the cause of right.

He strove, he spoke, and passed a weary spell,  
While clubs and tear gas tried to hold him back.  
"I may not get there..." were his words, a knell.

The dream lived on beyond that fateful year.  
The bridge held, while the ranks of marchers swelled,  
And pushed aside the bigotry and fear.

What makes us reach together for a goal,  
While the chasm widens beneath our feet?  
We seek to build a bridge to make us whole.

But bridges take a while to build, and cross,  
So, some leap into currents, fearing naught  
For time is short, and fear's our albatross.

What currents do we have to swim to brave  
The hatred that erodes our conjoint work?  
On rafts of hope, some ride the swelling wave.

Brothers, sisters rail against each other  
Brown, and black, and beige, and white and pale  
Forgetting we are born of earth, our mother.

This dream for which we're marching is the grail.  
So far away, and yet we see its form.  
And so, through wind and storm, we shall prevail.

We'll hold each other's hands in loving trust.

We'll push ahead, and steer our course with love  
And build a land where all is fair and just.

This is the dream, and this the hope sustained.  
And this, the land beloved, do we seek  
For us to live in freedom unrestrained,  
And all our children live the truth we speak.

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\*A bespoke poem I wrote for, and read at the MLK, Jr. Day celebrations hosted by the WMCC