

ALIBAMU, I clear the path

Your face is the colour of sunset
at the shoreline where we meet

Alibamu, Alibamu

I clear the path

Your eyes bear witness to world's long forgotten and those still unknown

A darkened sky heavy with diamonds reaches out to us

And when we chase one drinking gourd

Through the dense pine forests

uncertain of the next station

I clear the path

Jesus wept in the rubble of a

church on Sunday morning

I am the echo of four little voices silent and stilled

Alibamu, Alibamu

I clear the path

I am the tired feet of marchers

who could not be turned around

Crossing over the crimson stained bridge

Alibamu, Alibamu

I clear the path

I am the hornet of justice that hums and hovers and stings

the ears of those who stood in the doorways

of schools and state houses

I am the cry and moan of a pregnant field at high cotton time

I am the eternal dawn that sweeps away the hooded terror of night

Alibamu, Alibamu

I clear the path

For John Lewis

There are special names for you that inevitably are heard when I see you on TV

Trailblazer, drum major, lion for justice - yes, I know

But human

says it best

Human enough to care for your people and your country

Human enough to lift the veil of hatred, ignorance and destruction

Human enough to feel the rage of a generation and fight for the powerless

Human enough to believe against all odds that hope would prevail

Human enough to forgive those that beat you on the bridge

Human enough to share the light of freedom with all God's children

There are special names for people like you

who have changed the course of history

for those who have remained awake and alert to the call of freedom

For those who have lifted humanity and the aspirations of a people

from one Bloody Sunday to the inauguration of Obama

For those who walk the longest mile from poverty and oppression

to opportunity

Those special names are befitting and they soar across the airwaves

but it is the human tone that echoes across all the years

Human enough to laugh at the absurd

Human enough to cry when the pain and joy

break the levees of our hearts

Human enough to talk to the children in the classroom

telling the stories again and again, lest we forget

Human enough to encourage a young teacher on his path

Human enough to believe that all human lives matter

Yes, there are special names for you befitting a legendary hero

Then there are the special names and words that I say to myself

that when woven together are known simply as a prayer of thanks

Ferguson

Has the world gone mad?

Someone call the cops

Bring some order to this chaos

But who can you trust

when the same person in blue

who killed your son

is the one who

protects your property

with his gun?

Poem for Paris

The pen

Dangerous

Lethal

A threat to our society

To be crushed

To be killed

To be destroyed

Only to be refilled

with the ink of martyrs

For Elizabeth in Spain

We must never forget the golden light

That shined on the walls of Salamanca

As we took the cobblestone paths up to the meeting halls and Plaza filled with troubadours

Trodding in the very steps of Columbus who had his feverish wanderlust ideas

that would take him across oceans

which our ancestors too once had to cross

You in your perfect Spanish accent and me with my flashcards and notes

Together we climbed a little higher

in this citadel of learning presiding over Castilla y Leon

Our child in your belly

As we studied Franco, flamenco and Unamuno

We must never forget the golden light

that shined on the walls of Salamanca

that illuminated another world of possibilities