April 3, 1968

A poem for the new year in honor of Dr.Martin Luther King, Jr. and some “food for thought” in this “post - empathic” age.

January 21, 2019 By Lora René Tucker

In remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, I reflected on Dr. King’s last 24 hours on earth; the day before he became immortal. History books don’t teach about the Sanitation men’s strike or what the average person endured when the tsunami of racial-political energy converged on the city of Memphis. Now, back stories and conspiracy theories have made great documentaries and movies. “Some said” Dr. King knew what was coming, that there were foreboding signs of Dr. King’s demise. Others gave various conspiracy theories that rivaled President Kennedy’s. Imagine the constant anticipation of doom that followed him, Dr. King gave his all anyway, having in the back of his mind that at any time...

He had courage, integrity, and I suspect, gratitude in his attitude (know what I mean, friends of Bill). His life made a mark on history. His “life - imprint” changed my world, your world, and the world yet to come. I asked myself: “What is my “life - imprint”? What have I done; what could I do, to leave a positive mark that can ripple through time? It’s not about moving a mountain but leaving an imprint in honor of the Kings and Queens to come.

May we all move with gratitude and leave blessings in our wake.

Have a blessed ML King Day.

APRIL 3, 1968

Lorraine

Welcomed a King and his court

with Gideon Bibles in the drawers,

ice in the buckets.

Highly noted in the Green Book

Lorraine made sure they felt welcomed

With the sheets folded down

(Not over someone’s head)

and hermetically sealed soap on the vanity.

Lorraine,
the quintessential hostess
Briefly held him and his dream
Gave them respite,
even just for one night.

Memphis was his mountaintop;
He told her he came back
having something to prove
in a city of two worlds:

Proud men as human billboards
Reminding narrow minds
they, too, are American
Facing men with centuries of disdain
Group think of poisoned minds
Incensed that the “service class”
Deserved to be served.

Lorraine knows of service:
Available all night
Guaranteed safe after sundown;
Yet, in 24 hours
what Lorraine had to do
would be more than hanging towels
and fluffing pillows.

Balcony his perch
he stood looking down at his knights
making plans for the promised land
Sun in his eyes
He vowed to return
leaving Lorraine his disheveled sheets

smothered cigarette in the ashtray

dreams scattered across the floor

Mulberry Street became the road

to the promised land –

But for the rest of us

the road had a detour.

Like Lemmings

we veered off the cliff

We all fell

when his head was pierced

by white hot hate speeding

through the Cointelpro‘s crosshairs…

Right in front of Lorraine.

Lorraine

Didn’t want the attention or fame

Nor the responsibility of cleaning his blood and brains

She knew nothing would ever be the same

So, she embraced her place in history

Kept her Green Book address

And changed her name. *

(*The Lorraine Motel is now the National Civil Rights Museum; 450 Mulberry Street, Memphis, TN.)

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