

UU Spoken Word Piece

When They Speak of Our Time They Will Say

REGIE GIBSON: When they speak of our time, they will say-- they will say it was a time when truth abandoned our words. When running sores passed for a false messiah's mouth. When television super shrinks conducted group psychosis. When drugged up teenagers lived in a haze of oblivion. They will say this was when we hamster wheeled inside the jagged jaws of death. Death that stood above us, licking its murderous lips. When blues and jazz meant nothing to the asterisk of adolescent faces lost in the footnote of pop cult hysteria.

They will say this was the hour of the falling towers. When halos of metal rain screams on our cities and smoke blackened the skies until the sun was a jaundiced memory. They will say it was a time when English spoken with the wrong accent meant an uncertain fate and both red and blue states forgot that God is color blind. They will say this was a time that we drank of Hollywood's hemlock as intellectual cowards. Powered and bow to the powers and promises of gold.

They will say that a horrible darkness whispered our names. Whispered our names until we closed our eyes and trembled with fear. Trembled until we became that darkness we feared. They will say that this was a time of war in the name of terror, in the name of freedom, for the sake of peace so there would be no more war in the name of. They will say this was a time of shrunken bellies and refugees and of blood being plagued by the ache of disease, and of islands floating away on rafts of human bodies. They will say that this was a time of the bullet bite, the misogynist lyric, and the anti truth when we danced to the beat of our children's cracking skulls.

But let them also say that this was a time we fought against a self-inflicted genocide. That something truly human in us stood up to resist the Orwellian jackboot. That finally in the rumbling throat of Ray Charles, we heard what America could become. That in the bite of Mark Twain's wit, we finally got the punchline. Finally realized it was us. Finally realized that manifest destiny could no longer patch the human sized hole in our histories.

Let them say that this was when we said yes to each other again. Yes again, and again, and again, and again, and again. And the pages of Pablo Neruda verses resounded with peace for the coming twilights. Peace for the bridge. Peace for the wine. Peace for the letters that seek us and rise in our blood, entwining the old song with land and loves. Peace for the city in the morning when bread rises. Peace for the ashes of our fallen. Peace for all the living. Peace for every water. Peace for every land.

Let them say that this was when the woman stepped forward, declaring I am that I am. And we men began to break ourselves of the need to break women. Let them say. [APPLAUSE]

Let them say that this, this was when we struggled against fist and fallacy. This was a time of lawyers abandoning courtrooms to plant wheat in Kenyan fields. That this was when we found truth. That truth found our tongues and we were unafraid at this time to open our mouths and speak it.

Let them say that we were a people of faith in a time when faith was in crisis. That we were a people of love when it made no sense to love at all. We were a people of hope when it made no sense to hope at all. That we still believed that love could be as simple as the images our ancestors painted in caves and on rocks. Images that birthed our first human songs like water, and rain, and river, and flower, and sun, and moon, and star. Because even as the Earth shook beneath our shoes, we knew there were things about us that would never change. Let them. [APPLAUSE]

Let them say that this was the time we desperately reached through the malignant maelstrom of electronic chaos. Reached through the mad invocations of the soulless who profit from this poisonous pathology of our time. And we found others there, with our own eyes, our own faces, our own hands, reaching back.