

my city is paved with the words of the minister who had a dream
of course, there is much more to his story
before him countless warriors crawled
and fought
and finally walked
so that he could run

i see his legacy
in the museum i visited with my parents when we first came to this city
carefully tracing lifelines on the glass
observing each story

i hear his outcry
on the roar of the mississippi
called mighty
and it earns the title
forever in an unstoppable motion

i feel his influence
yet the reason his deeds lie in memphis is that there was progress to be made here
and there were people who couldn't handle that fact
if there wasn't anywhere to go, there wouldn't be a movement

there was a migration around a century ago
continuing through the years my parents were born
hard to place into perspective
because we often forget that inequality is not ancient
but it's also hard to forget the six million people
who fled the region i grew up in
because corrupted power decided
they didn't deserve human rights
enforced hatred under the guise of antiquated constructs

their feet carried them north

it's no coincidence that we march
when there is change to be made
because migration is not only escaping what's bad
it's the drumming of feet
underneath a chorus of hope
every step towards true equality
is matched by a physical step that says
we won't be stopped
we won't be silenced

my city is paved with the words of the minister who had a dream
but my town is riddled with a scream
that echoes off of every building,
to make america great again
my neighbors harbor cowardice and prejudice
hatred tucked beneath ball caps
red as the blood of the people they stomped over to make
some semblance of twisted progress

what they
cannot
will not
understand
is that the only greatness coming from this country
was made by overcoming adversity
great like the migration
the escape from segregation
unimaginable to those who have everything served to them
our country is only great because of those who

could not
would not
stand still
and watch the times move forward around them
because complying with inaction is complying with injustice

textbooks leaving one to find the missing words in between pale and empty triumphs
they say you can't change history as they pray we forget the insurgents
they hide not only the heroes in the glow of more palatable progress but the martyrs too
never forget, never forgive
sing their names like a gospel because

what they
can not
will not
achieve
is the covering of footsteps that lead from the deepest south to the highest d.c. monuments

let auburn georgia clay stain the streets, a constant reminder
frame progress like it's the declaration of independence for all
treat revolution, an ever-turning rebellion, with the reverence we give every one of our
smallest victories

and through it all, keep moving.