

Lest Harlem see red  
 And suddenly sit on the edge of its bed  
 And shake the whole world with a new dream  
 As the squad cars come and the sirens scream  
 And a big black giant snatches bombs from the sky  
 And picks up a cop and lets him fly  
 Into the dust of the juncrow past  
 And laughs and Hollers  
 Kiss my  
 M&M!

Hey!  
 Scenario for a Little Black Movie,  
 You say?  
 A RED MOVIE TO MR. HEARST  
 Black and white workers united as one  
 In a city where  
 There'll never be  
 Air raids over Harlem  
 FOR THE WORKERS ARE FREE

What workers are free?  
 THE BLACK AND WHITE WORKERS—  
 You and me!  
 Looky here, everybody!  
 Look at me!

I'M HARLEM!

## Ballad of Ozie Powell

Red is the Alabama road,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell,  
 Redder now where your blood has flowed,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell.  
 Strong are the bars and steel the gate,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell,  
 The High Sheriff's eyes are filled with hate,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell.  
 The High Sheriff shoots and he shoots to kill  
 Black young Ozie Powell.

The Law's a Klansman with an evil will,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell.

Nine old men in Washington,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell,  
 Never saw the High Sheriff's gun  
 Aimed at Ozie Powell.

Nine old men so rich and wise,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell,  
 They never saw the High Sheriff's eyes  
 Stare at Ozie Powell.

But nine black boys know full well,  
 Don't they, Ozie Powell?  
 What it is to live in hell,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell.

The devil's a Kleagle with an evil will,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell,  
 A white High Sheriff who shoots to kill  
 Black young Ozie Powell.

And red is that Alabama road,  
 Ozie, Ozie Powell,  
 But redder now where your life's blood flowed,  
 Ozie! Ozie Powell!

Langston Hughes (1938)

## Let America Be America Again

Let America be America again.  
 Let it be the dream it used to be.  
 Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
 Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—  
 Let it be that great strong land of love  
 Where newer kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
 That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,  
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?  
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,  
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars,  
I am the red man driven from the land,  
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—  
And finding only the same old stupid plan  
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,  
Tangled in that ancient endless chain  
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!  
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!  
Of work the men! Of take the pay!  
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil,  
I am the worker sold to the machine,  
I am the Negro, servant to you all,  
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—  
Hungry yet today despite the dream,  
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!  
I am the man who never got ahead,  
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream  
In that Old World while still a serf of kings,  
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,  
That even yet its mighty daring sings  
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned  
That's made America the land it has become.  
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas  
In search of what I meant to be my home—  
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,  
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,

And torn from Black Africa's strand I came  
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?  
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?  
The millions shot down when we strike?  
The millions who have nothing for our pay?  
For all the dreams we've dreamed  
And all the songs we've sung  
And all the hopes we've held  
And all the flags we've hung,  
The millions who have nothing for our pay—  
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—  
The land that never has been yet—  
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.  
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—  
Who made America,  
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,  
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,  
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—  
The steel of freedom does not stain.  
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,  
We must take back our land again,  
America!

O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath—  
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,  
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,  
We, the people, must redeem  
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.  
The mountains and the endless plain—  
All, all the stretch of these great green states—  
And make America again!