

Legacy: for my children
By Donald Edward Tillery (1989)

I wanted to
leave you the world
filled with possibilities
to laugh, to die
to feel, to cry
just as the
miracles
you are
inside
& out

Freedom is a simple thing
really

I wanted not to have
this talk with you
We fought the fight
Grandmas and Grandpas
fought the fight
We lived
in the shadows
of being
and screamed
to the light
We opened the windows
but not the doors

People died
Evers died, children died,
Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner died,
Malcolm died, Martin died
martyrdom ad infinitum
people died

Freedom is a simple thing
really

What the racist
has not learned is
what you build
is determined by how you

build
You cannot build freedom on slavery
You cannot build love on hate
You cannot build truth on lies
You cannot be free
unless we are all free

We are the intimate reflection
of each other in this world
regardless of the rosecolored mirages
we create

Now I understand
the tears in my stoic mother's eyes
a crying woman who never cried
when she'd look at me
at points of change
She fiercely protected
but could not save me
from what she knew
I look at you when someone says
You don't belong here! Nigger!
with tears in my eyes
I wanted to protect you
from the hurt and pain
I could protect
but could not save
I didn't know whether
to kill or cry
I did not want to have
to have this talk with
you
But I do

You are
the most wonderful
miracles in this life
Not because you are bad or good
weak or strong
but because you are
as each person is
a miracle
of life
And I love you beyond life

I wanted to leave you
the world
filled with possibilities
I can't
I leave you with the truth
A world to build
you are the saving grace
of a graceless land
Wear the mantle well,
SoulEyes
It will be the
fire
next time
I can protect
but cannot save you
from your destiny

Love, Dad

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