

## **Martin Luther King. I have a dream speech August 28th 1963**

Martin Luther King's father took him out to buy a pair of new shoes. They went into an empty shoe shop and sat down in the front row of seats. A white shop assistant came up to them and said that she would only serve them if they moved to the seats in the back of the shop where black people were able to be served. Mr. King was outraged and saw no point in moving to other seats when no one else was even in the shop. He especially didn't like the idea that people had to sit in special chairs, simply because of the colour of their skin. "We'll either buy shoes sitting here, or we won't buy shoes at all!" said Mr. King. "I can't serve you here", repeated the shop assistant. At this point, both Martin and his father stood up and walked out of the shop.

When Martin was 6 years old, he experienced how hard it was for black people. Until then, his two best friends were white boys who lived nearby. They played together almost every day. When they started school, they went to a school for white boys while Martin went to a school for black children. His friend's mother kept telling him that they could not play with him anymore. As Martin was so young, he didn't understand why. He decided to ask his mother. She told him about the history of black people as slaves in the USA and that some people still looked down on black people. "Don't let it make you feel as though you are not as good as white people", said his mother. "You're just as good as anyone else, and don't you forget it!"

## **Rosa Parks**

***December 2, 1955***

***Dear Diary,***

*Yesterday, it became too much. I got on another one of them busses after another long day at work. I paid my fare and walked to the back; it was almost second-nature. Luckily, there were seats open in the negro section, so I got to sit down. All us in the back were sitting quietly enjoying the ride and some time to be off our feet. We got to the next stop and a white man got on. The white section was full, but I sure wasn't moving. The bus started to move and I thought he was just going to stand but, sure enough, that bus driver stopped and came marching to the back. He was acting all high and mighty, shouting about being disrespectful and such. He demanded that we get up to give him a seat. And not only one of us, but two would have to get up, because heaven forbid a white man sit next to a negro. The bus driver, still hootin' and hollerin' starts pointing his self-righteous accusing fingers at me, telling me I have to stand up. I'm a little black woman, minding my own business on the bus and he's gonna make me get up so some white man can sit down? I'm sitting in the negro section, what more does this man want? Now, not only are the busses segregated, but this superior creature, the white man, can't even manage to stand on the bus when just two days ago I watched a young black child stand on the bus.*

*That was the final straw. I was sick and tired of watching my brothers and sisters be treated as if we aren't good enough. For all of time, we've been treated like we're inferior to people based on the color of our skin. I refused. I sat, anchored in that seat and I politely said that I was not getting up. The bus driver nearly turned red with anger, threatening to have me arrested. I told him that would be just fine. He wasn't joking, that bus didn't move until the police arrived and took me right off that bus. I'm proud of my actions and I hope they can make a difference somehow. The whites needed to know that I'm tired of being treated like I'm not an equal, and other blacks need to know that it's okay to stand up for what you believe in. I hope I can instill energy and power in some more people to stand up for our rights. God Bless,*

*Rose Louise Parks*

## **Nelson Mandela - I am prepared to die speech - 1964**

Above all, we want equal political rights, because without them our disabilities will be permanent. I know this sounds revolutionary to the whites in this country, because the majority of voters will be Africans. This makes the white man fear democracy.

But this fear cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the only solution which will guarantee racial harmony and freedom for all. It is not true that the enfranchisement of all will result in racial domination. Political division, based on colour, is entirely artificial and, when it disappears, so will the domination of one colour group by another. The ANC has spent half a century fighting against racialism. When it triumphs it will not change that policy.

This then is what the ANC is fighting. Their struggle is a truly national one. It is a struggle of the African people, inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. It is a struggle for the right to live.

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

## **Nina Simone**

The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam  
And I mean every word of it  
Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
Can't you see it? Can't you feel it?  
It's all in the air  
I can't stand the pressure much longer  
Somebody say a prayer  
Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
This is a show tune  
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet  
Hound dogs on my trail  
School children sitting in jail  
Black cat cross my path  
I think everyday's gonna be my last  
Lord, have mercy on this land of mine  
We all gonna get it in due time  
I don't belong here, I don't belong there  
I've even stopped believing in prayer  
Don't tell me, I tell you  
Me and my people just about due

I've been there so I know  
They keep on saying, "Go slow!"  
But that's just the trouble, do it slow  
Washing the windows, do it slow  
Picking the cotton, do it slow  
You're just plain rotten, do it slow  
You're too damn lazy, do it slow  
The thinking's crazy, do it slow  
Where am I going? What am I doing?  
I don't know, I don't know  
Just try to do your very best  
Stand up be counted with all the rest  
For everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
I bet you thought I was kiddin'  
Picket lines, school boy cots  
They try to say it's a communist plot  
All I want is equality  
For my sister, my brother, my people and me  
Yes, you lied to me all these years  
You told me to wash and clean my ears  
And talk real fine just like a lady  
And you'd stop calling me Sister Sadie  
Oh, but this whole country is full of lies  
You're all gonna die and die like flies  
I don't trust you any more  
You keep on saying, "Go slow! Go slow!"  
But that's just the trouble, do it slow  
Desegregation, do it slow  
Mass participation, do it slow

Reunification, do it slow

Do things gradually, do it slow

But bring more tragedy, do it slow

Why don't you see it? Why don't you feel it?

I don't know, I don't know

You don't have to live next to me

Just give me my equality

Everybody knows about Mississippi

Everybody knows about Alabama

Everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

That's it!