

Marching with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

by Fabu

Strong in her wants from birth, Mattie called Sister is the baby girl with parents and six others telling her who to be and what to do. When she became African in her dress, hair, and thoughts, well we listened to make sure good sense was talking outta her young mouth. Sister made like she was marching with Reverend King and nobody better try stop her.

People forget that Reverend King's voice was fed by millions of whispers. Black folks whispering across America, in the cotton fields of southern towns. In the factories of northern cities. In prisons or in public. In shotgun houses, tenement buildings and projects, folks whispered This ain't right how we treated.

Reverend King's voice gave sound to the tongues of our grandfathers and grandmothers silenced by lynching, segregation and the terror of Klu Klux Klan ghost riders. His voice gave sound to our fathers and mothers swallowing down racism and injustice again and again. This was the time when most were shut up or shut down by fear.

Mattie said she was marching and as her middle sister, I was marching too. The march began like the Mississippi river in flood season, folks spilling out everywhere. Reverend King was far up front with the "hoity-toities" and it was us, the hard working regulars in the middle and the back.

His voice came in waves. Freedom ran through our veins causing us to march straighter and sing stronger. Then we heard shattering glass. Screams burst as tear gas popped, spreading quickly when Memphis police waded into the crowd swinging wooden batons, whacking brains and flesh.

The running began and we were pushed towards the Mississippi river. I thought we surely joining the ancestors at the bottom. Sister grabbed my hand and said we gonna make it. Blood in the streets. Folks limping and holding broken body parts. Paddy wagons stuffed with Black people. We are no longer deaf or mute but loud in remembering these times.