

OCTOBER 3-4, 2025  
NEW MARKET, TN

FIRED UP,  
ROOTS DOWN



THE KEY OF RESISTANCE  
SONGS

# SONGBOOK

SONGS COMPILED BY SONGS IN  
THE KEY OF RESISTANCE, A  
PROJECT OF THE KAIROS CENTER  
FOR RELIGIONS, RIGHTS, AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE

H I G H | A N D | F  
H | A | R.

Highlander  
The Movement School



\*LISTEN TO THE SONGS BY  
CLICKING THE HYPERLINK  
IN THEIR TITLES.

## Put Your Roots Down

**By: Molly Hartwell**

Put your roots down,  
Put your feet on the ground,  
You hear what she says if you listen

'Cause the sound of river as it moves across the stones  
Is the same sound as the blood in your body as it moves  
across your bones.

Are you listening?

## More Waters Rising

**By Saro Lynch**

*This is a song that I created back in March 2016 when the HB2 bill was passed here in North Carolina. Now in the early days of the Trump administration, this song feels deeply resonant. For me, this song is about seeing what's coming on the horizon: harder times that are inevitable and unavoidable. But the answer to the fear of what's coming is resiliency and claiming a strength within ourselves that has been there all along. Aspects of this song are inspired from elements of African-American Civil Rights and protest songs.*

There are more waters rising this I know this I know  
There are more waters rising this I know  
There are more waters rising they will find their way to me  
There are more waters rising this I know this I know  
This I know  
There are more waters rising this I know

... There are more fires burning this I know this I know...

... There are more mountains falling...

We will wade through the waters this I know this I know  
We will wade through the waters this I know  
We will wade through the waters when they find their way  
to us  
We will wade through the waters this I know this I know  
We will wade through the waters this I know

... We will walk through the fires

... We will rebuild the mountains this I know

## We Rise

**By: Batya Levine**

*"We Rise" was inspired by the powerful, prayerful resistance Batya Levine witnessed and experienced at Standing Rock. This song is an attempt to remember and to hold that model of resistance in our hearts and in our minds.*

We rise, humbly hearted  
Rise, won't be divided  
Rise, with spirit to guide us  
Rise!

In hope, in prayer, we find ourselves here  
In hope, in prayer, we're right here  
(x2)

We rise, all of the children  
Rise, elders with wisdom  
Rise, ancestors surround us  
Rise!

In hope, in prayer, we find ourselves here  
In hope, in prayer, we're right here  
(x2)

We rise, up from the wreckage  
Rise, with tears and with courage  
Rise, fighting for life  
We rise!

## I'm Gonna Lift My Sister Up

**By: Faya Rose Touré**

*This song was written by Faya Ora Rose Touré. She is an American civil rights activist and lawyer. She was the first Black female judge in Alabama. Faya is a founder of the National Voting Rights Museum in Selma, AL and helped coordinate the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee to mark the anniversary of Bloody Sunday.*

I'm gonna lift my sister up She is not heavy (3x)  
If I don't lift her up (3x)  
We will fall down

I'm gonna lift my brother up, he is not heavy (3x)  
I'm gonna lift my siblings up, they are not heavy (3x)  
We're gonna lift our children up, they are not heavy (3x)  
We're gonna lift our people up, they are not heavy (3x)

## Courage

*South African Anti-Apartheid movement song used to learn the names of political prisoners*

Courage, my friend  
You do not move alone  
We will, move with you  
And sing your spirit home

Justice, my friend  
You do not cry alone  
We will, cry with you  
And sing your spirit home

Palestine, my friend  
You do not move alone  
We will, move with you  
And sing your spirit home

Freedom, my friend  
You do not pray alone  
We will pray with you  
And sing your spirit home

## Mi Unica

**By: The Peace Poets**

*This song was written by the Peace Poets in collaboration with Migrant Justice and Mijente fighting against the criminalization of immigrant communities and deportations. The Spanish lyrics say - hey yo, my people we bring the strength. Liberation for all is our only flag. It goes on to lift up a native prophecy of the Condor and Eagle, representing a time when the Condor (the south) and the Eagle (the north), societies that had split into two different paths, would be united and create a new level of consciousness for humanity. The song is an affirmation of the connection we share across boundaries, across borders, across identities.*

Oye mi gente traemos la fuerza  
La libertad es mi única bandera  
Rise up my people, my condors, my eagles  
No human being will ever be illegal

## The People Are My Reason

**By: The Peace Poets**

*This song was written in community and collaboration between the Peace Poets & Black Lives Matter in Oakland, CA.*

The people are my reason  
The people are my reason  
The people are the reason I am never giving up

'Cause you can't hide from freedom  
You can't hide from freedom  
You can't hide  
No, you can't hide  
'Cause freedom's gonna come

## Set It Right Again

**By Ana Hernandez**

*This song adapts a line from Sojourner Truth's stirring and courageous speech at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron Ohio, as transcribed by Marius Robinson: "I have heard the Bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again." The song calls us all to action as we contemplate the "great trouble in this land" – and that we are the ones who will "set it right again".*

There's a great trouble in the land  
We're gonna set it right again (3x)  
We're gonna set it right, set it right again

Trouble been brewing too many years  
We need healing across the land  
We need justice across the land  
We're building a movement across the land

## Rebel

**By: The Peace Poets**

Rebel against the war they sell  
Rebel against the lies they tell  
Rebel and let us do this right  
Rebel for the children in the world tonight

... Rebel for all the people in...  
... Palestine  
... The Congo  
... Sudan  
... Los Angeles

## That's How the Light Gets In

**By: Leonard Cohen, Adapted by the Dream Defenders**

Forget your perfect offering  
Just ring the bells that still can ring  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in

## We Shall Be Known

**By Karisha Longaker of MaMuse**

We shall be known by the company we keep  
By the ones who circle round to tend these fires  
We shall be known by the ones who sow and reap  
The seeds of change, alive from deep within the earth

It is time now, it is time now that we thrive  
It is time we lead ourselves into the well  
It is time now, and what a time to be alive  
In this Great Turning we shall learn to lead in love  
In this Great Turning we shall learn to lead in love

## We Are the Children

**By: Ashore Tosihwe**

We are the children of the ones who did not die  
And we are the children of the people who could fly  
And we are the children of the ones who persevered  
We are fearless we are strong and we ready to carry on

... And we ready to carry on  
... Fearless! fearless! Fearless!  
... And we ready to carry on

## Never Alone

**By: The Peace Poets**

*"Never Alone" is a powerful anthem born from the No Separate Justice campaign, which held monthly vigils outside the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City to protest the inhumane treatment of Muslim detainees in the post-9/11 era. Rooted in the belief that we carry our ancestors, teachers, and communities with us in the struggle for justice, the song offers a deep affirmation of collective strength and spiritual solidarity. Sung across movements—from immigrant justice to climate action—it reminds us that even in the face of isolation and repression, we are never alone.*

We have not come here alone  
We carry our people in our bones  
We have not come here alone  
If you listen you can hear them in our soul

## We Were Made for These Times

**By: Angela Gabriel**

*Text inspired by Clarisa Pinkola Estés in her powerful piece "[Letter To A Young Activist During Troubled Times](#)"*

Don't give up hope, we were made for these times  
Don't give up hope, we were made for these times  
Don't give up hope, we were made for these times  
Show your soul, it shines like gold  
In these dark times

Don't lose heart  
Don't give up hope  
We're marching for freedom  
We're fighting for justice

## Oh Palestine

**By: Lu Aya**

Oh Palestine  
You are not alone  
We will be with you  
Until you're safe at home.

## May This Body Be a Bridge

**By: Te Martin**

*Te Martin wrote this song after being at Standing Rock for several months in 2016 to stand with **Indigenous** water protectors from over 200 tribes to protest the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Said Abdallah, a Palestinian friend of Te's, had joined the protests at Standing Rock and shared the connections he saw between the militarized violence at Standing Rock and the occupation of Palestine. He said that he wanted his "body to be a bridge for liberation of his Palestinian homelands." These words and the persistence of the water protectors at Standing Rock inspired this song.*

May this body be a bridge  
For the healing of this land  
May the river flow through us  
Cleansing greed from our hands

We are, we are born from the water  
We are, we are made from the land  
Teach us, teach us oh Great Mother  
To bring, to bring peace to this land

## What Happens to You

**By: Je Naé Taylor**

*Je Naé wrote this song on a zoom call in 2019 while observing community members share about their experiences, frustrations, addictions, etc. She used this simple phrase as she pointed to each “window” to let them know that whatever happens to them, matters to her.*

What happens to you  
Matters to me  
What happens to you, you, you, you, you, you  
It matters to me

## Until All of Us Are Free

**By: Arnaé Batson**

*Inspired by the words of Fannie Lou Hamer— “Until I am free, you are not free either” during a speech she delivered at the founding of the [National Women’s Political Caucus in Washington, D.C., on July 10, 1971](#)*

None of us, none of us, no of us are free  
Until all of us, all of us, all of us are free

## We Will Win

**By Philip Agnew**

They told us it was over  
They told us the world got colder  
They told us too much on our shoulders  
But we say that we will win

... But we believe that we will win  
... But we know that we will win

## Never Again Para Nadie/ Free Palestine

By emet ezell

*Never Again Para Nadie was written by poet and songcatcher, emet ezell, the night before a big Never Again Action and Cosecha march in Boston the summer of 2019. The organizers expected a few hundred to show up but more than double that number turned out and nearly a thousand marched through the streets that day singing this song all the way to the ICE detention center to protest family separation and child detention.*

We’ve got ancestors at our backs  
We’ve got generations forward  
We’ve got land and spirit in our bones  
Never again para nadie  
Never again— Free Palestine

## Our Liberation

**By: The Peace Poets**

*“Our Liberation” is a powerful anthem born in the heart of the Occupy Wall Street movement, rooted in the ancient truth that our destinies are bound together. Written by The Peace Poets in the streets of New York City, the song proclaims, “my liberation is your liberation, and your liberation is my liberation”—a mantra that affirms our shared humanity and defies the forces that try to divide us. Sung in protests, vigils, Pride marches, and quiet moments of reflection, this song is a soulful call to collective freedom, resistance, and love.*

Your liberation is my liberation  
And my liberation is your liberation  
So let me hear the people say  
Let’s Get Free (Let’s Get Free)  
Let’s Get Free (Let’s Get Free)

## God Loves Us All

**Adapted by Charon Hribar**

*The simple tune of this old English folk round has been reimagined by social movements to proclaim the universality of God’s love and God’s call for justice. On December 10, Human Rights Day, this song rang out at the U.S.–Mexico border as faith leaders from diverse traditions gathered for a powerful religious ceremony in solidarity with asylum seekers. The “Love Knows No Borders” action called for an end to immigrant detention and deportation, respect for the right to migrate, and the demilitarization of the border. Kneeling in prayer before border guards and military troops—and within earshot of families on the Mexican side—clergy and community members sang songs of love and resistance. Their presence was a public witness to the sacredness of every human life.*

Love love love love  
Sisters this is our call  
We will not bow to injustice  
God loves us all

... Brothers this is our call  
... Siblings this is our call

## Rich Man's House

**By: Minka Wiltz and the Economic Human Rights Choir of the New Freedom Bus Tour**

### Rich Man's House Oral History Video

*Rich Man's House is a powerful song that was birthed by poor and homeless families of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union during the New Freedom Bus Tour in 1998. It is a song that lifts up the power of the 140 million poor and low income people in this country who are organizing to take back what is ours. This song has been sung at state capitals, eviction defense actions, mass meetings, bus tours and in homeless encampments to lift up our dignity and humanity as poor and dispossessed people in a cruelly unjust society. As the leaders of the New Freedom Bus Tour learned, the struggles they were facing in Kensington and the injustices that they were organizing to end were connected to the struggles that other poor and dispossessed people across the United States. Rich Man's House became a symbol for the capitalist system that has become all too comfortable with the death of our people at the hands of poverty, systemic racism, militarism and ecological devastation. The song became a declaration that we would no longer allow this death dealing system to "walk all over me." We sing this song today to demand that our lives and our dignity be the guiding priority of our work to build the world our people need and deserve.*

I went down to the rich man's house  
And I took back what he stole from me  
Took back my dignity  
Took back my humanity (2x)

And now it's under my feet (where?)  
Under my feet (where?)  
Under my feet (where?)  
Under my feet  
Ain't gonna let no system walk all over me

... Went down to the ICE office  
... Went down to the DOGE office  
... Went down to Congress  
... Went down to the White House...

## Songs in the Key of Resistance Theme Song

**By: Lu Aya**

*The SKOR theme song was written in 2020 as a song to ground gatherings of cultural organizers and movement song leaders in the power of song for building and inspiring our movements.*

Sing your song  
In the key of resistance  
Sing it strong  
If you're down for the vision of us  
All belonging  
If you hear hope calling  
Sing your song

### Liberation Today

**Adapted by Ciara Taylor, Pauline Pisano, Steff Reed and Charon Hribar**

*This song was adapted from a traditional folk song, Bele Mama. Likely of Cameroonian origin, it's been passed down through oral tradition. "Bele Mama," translates to "Call Mother" in the Oroko language of Cameroon, referring to calling one's mother to join a celebration. The song has been adapted in movement spaces to be a calling for liberation.*

Hey na na, hey na na, hey na na yeah...

You only get what you're organized to take

Hey na na, hey na na, hey na na yeah...

Liberation today

Hey na na, hey na na, hey na na yeah...

I need you to survive

Hey na na, hey na na, hey na na yeah...

We need to organize

Hey na na, hey na na, hey na na yeah...

You only get what you're organized to take

## No Nos Moveran / We Shall Not Be Moved

*This song is a classic of the labor and Civil Rights struggles spanning the 20 th century. Originating from the spiritual “I Shall Not Be Moved”, the song first became an abolitionist song and was eventually translated into Spanish, becoming “No Nos Moveran” during actions such as Mexican American and women-led pecan-shellers strike of 1938. The song was also used to protest the fascist government in Spain of the middle 20 th century, as well as the anti-Pinochet movement Chile following the violent coup of 1973. The song was sung extensively in the US during the Civil Rights Movement when it became an anthem taught by the Highlander Folk School to movement organizers and popularized by groups like The Weavers and many others. Joan Baez continued to sing the song in both Spanish and English, performing in solidarity with Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta in the United Farmworkers strikes of the 1970s. We Shall Not Be Moved can be heard in the 2014 “Tillis 15” sit-ins, when Rev. Barber led the song as a way for the community to bear witness to the suffering caused by the political action of Sen. Thom Tillis and many others.*

No,no, no nos moveran! no, no, no nos moveran!

Como un arbol firme junto al rio

No nos moveran

We shall not, we shall not be moved

We shall not, we shall not be moved

Just like a tree that's planted by the water,

We shall not be moved

Unidos en la lucha, no nos moveran

Unidos en la lucha, no nos moveran

Como un arbol firme junto al rio

No nos moveran

We're fighting for our rights (and)

We shall not be moved...

No,no, no nos moveran! no, no, no nos moveran!

Como un arbol firme junto al rio

No nos moveran

Unidos en la vida, no nos moveran...

## We Have Come

**By: Lu Aya**

We have come with a force more powerful

Than the guns in our enemy's hands

It's our love of all creation

That will liberate this land

## Somebody's Hurting My Brother

**By: Yara Allen**

*“Somebody’s Hurting My Brother”, now a core song of the campaign, was born in a church in Stokes County, NC after the devastating 2014 Duke Energy coal ash spill. On its creation, Theomusicologist Yara Allen says the following: “Before Dr. Barber closed the town hall with a prayer, he asked me to sing. The only thing I could hear was, ‘somebody’s hurting our brother, we won’t be silent’. Then it was my time to walk up there and I went with a blank slate, except for those few words. I asked the audience to sing along with me. I paused for just a moment and relied on what my faith tradition taught me, which was to lean into the spirit in that moment and just be guided. And I started singing and, and that song came out. And as I looked over at the young boy who had testified—a 14 year old boy who was in remission for cancer—and the verse, ‘Somebody’s hurting our children’ poured out followed by ‘Somebody’s poisoning the water’. And so, that was how that song came about. Now a core song of the campaign, people have continued to expand the issues to include their areas struggles.*

Somebody’s hurting my brother

and it’s gone on far too long

Yes, it’s gone on far too long

It’s gone on far too long

I said, somebody’s hurting my brother

and it’s gone on far too long

And we won’t be silent anymore

Somebody's tryin to take our housing...

Somebody's denying us healthcare...

Somebody's tryin to steal our vote now...

Somebody's hurting poor people...

Somebody's hurting our children/ families/ veterans...

## Rise Up

**By: Charon Hribar and Jose Vasquez**

*“Rise Up” is a song written in the wake of growing uprisings around the United States in 2016 responding to the unjust killings of Black people (Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and others) by police; the militarized response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation; the government’s intentional disregard that led to the water crisis in Flint, MI; as well as worsening economic conditions experienced by the 140 million poor and low income people in this country. Charon Hribar and Jose Vasquez wrote this song as a mantra that could be used by grassroots leaders who were coming together to organize for the launch of a new Poor People’s Campaign in December 2017. The song was first shared at a national gathering of grassroots movement leaders, artists, cultural workers, and media makers in Baltimore, MD in August 2016. Drawing on a long-standing tradition of call and response music, “Rise Up” is a call to unite as poor and dispossessed people to put an end to the violence, hatred, and greed enacted against our people.*

Rise up we’re gonna rise up  
Rise up we’re gonna rise up  
We ain’t gonna let nobody turn us around  
Because the people united will stand our ground

Rise up we’re gonna rise up  
Rise up we’re gonna rise up  
The powers that be can’t keep us down  
We’re gonna rise up and turn the world around

Rise up come on and rise up  
Rise up come on and rise up  
The people are ready so follow our lead  
We’ll put an end to the violence, the hatred and greed

Rise up we’re gonna rise up  
Rise up we’re gonna rise up  
Rise up (4x)

## We Are the Movement

**By: The Peace Poets**

We are the movement  
Liberation moving  
For every single human  
We have come to win

## We Get There Together

**By: Josh Blaine**

*Joshua wrote this song in 2022 as part of a We Cry Justice artists collective project and was inspired by Dan Jones’ chapter from We Cry Justice, “A Mixed Multitude.” He also drew from the poem by Aurora Levins Morales, “Red Sea,” in which she challenges us to ask: what happens this time if we all cross together? This song has become an important song sung in protest spaces and gatherings calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. For a longer story behind the song, see the link above.*

No one is getting left behind this time  
No one is getting left behind  
No one is getting left behind this time  
We get there together or never get there at all  
We get there together or never get there at all

Hurra, hurra hurra Falestine  
Hurra, hurra hurra Falestine  
Hurra, hurra hurra Falestine  
We get there together or never get there at all  
We get there together or never get there at all

## Aqui Se Oye

**By: The Peace Poets**

Aquí se oye la voz de dignidad!  
Aquí se oye la voz de libertad!

## **Additional Resources:**

[Songs in the Key of Resistance Songbook](#)

[We Do Not Move Alone Songbook](#)

[Kairos #CeasefireNow Resources](#)

[Kairos Center Cultural Arts Program Resources](#)

[Honoring Ella Baker \(December 13, 1903- December 13, 1986\) - Kairos Center](#)

[“How Cultural Strategy Drives Long Term Change”](#)

[We Pray Freedom: Liturgies and Rituals from the Freedom Church of the Poor](#)