

SONGS IN THE KEY OF RESISTANCE SONG SHEET



**YOU ONLY
GET WHAT
YOU'RE
ORGANIZED
TO TAKE!**

*TITLES OF SONGS ARE HYPERLINKED TO AUDIO / VIDEO OF SONGS

This Little Light of Mine

Adapted by Carrie Klein, Charon Hribar, Joel McGlynn, and Steff Reed

This musical version of This Little Light of Mine was first shared by Matthew David Morris during the 2020 Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival M.O.R.E. Arts Unleashed Concert ahead of the 2020 Presidential Election. The lyrics have been adapted for the current moment of social, economic and political crises and the call to launch of Survival Revival.

This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

This here voice of mine
Is for singing songs of freedom (3x)
And it won't stop, til freedom comes

These here hands of mine
Are for helping out my neighbor (3x)
No matter who, no matter how, help them now

This here heart of mine
Is beating for survival (3x)
And it won't stop, til justice comes

These here feet of mine
Are marching for justice (3x)
Here they go on the road to revival

This here faith of mine
Is calling for revival (3x)
Calling out, calling loud, calling now

This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
And it won't stop til justice comes
And we won't stop til justice comes
And we won't stop til justice comes

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...

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

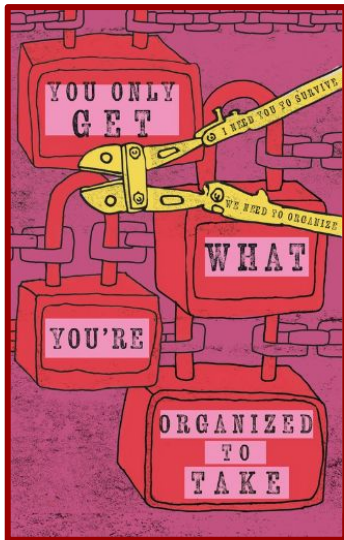
We Were Made for These Times

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



Mean Things

By John L. Handcox, Adapted by Avery Book and Charon Hribar

Also known as "Strange Things", this song has many variations, most notably by the legendary union organizer, poet and folk singer John Handcox. As an African American member of the Southern Tenant Farmer Union, Handcox defied Jim Crow laws during the 1930s at great personal risk by organizing across racial lines, using his music and poetry to bring workers together around shared grievances and aspirations for a better life. His music was eventually picked up by Alan Lomax and Pete Seeger in the 1960s, although the songwriter virtually vanished from the historical record after WWII until finally re-emerging in the 1980s. He would go on to perform songs like "Mean Things" for a new generation of labor activists until his death in 1992 at the age of 88. In this adaptation by Avery Book, the lyrics encompass the "mean things" that marginalize poor communities in the 21st century such as corporate greed that deprives people of a living wage, lack of health care, and housing. But there is also cause for optimism as the last chorus reminds us, "when the dispossessed unite/the end of poverty is in sight/there are good things happening in this land."

There are mean things happening in this land (2x)
But the movement's going on, and the movement's growing strong

There are mean things happening in this land

There are mean things happening in this land (2x)
Call and response: Oh those corporate profits soar, as the poor pay more and more
There are mean things happening in this land

...there go the wealthy billionaires, debt and suffering everywhere...

...healthcare cuts are on the rise, the sick and poor are left to die...

... to serve the Wall Street bottom line, our health and bodies on the line...

...Democracy it is our right and we won't give up the fight...

They'll be good things happening in this land (2x)
When the dispossessed unite the end of poverty is in sight
They'll be good things happening in this land

Were You There

African American Spiritual

Adapted by Moses Hernandez McGavin and Charon Hribar

Were you there when they ripped us from our homes?

Were you there when they ripped us from our homes?

Oh these times, these times

Are calling us to rise up, to rise up

Oh these times, these times

Are calling us to rise up, to rise up

Were you there when they left us sick to die?

Were you there when they left us sick to die?

Oh these times...

Were you there when they destroyed our homes?

Were you there when they destroyed our homes?

Oh these times...

Were you there when they made our love a crime?

Were you there when they made our love a crime?

Oh these times...

Were you there, when they razed all of our towns?

Were you there, when they razed all of our towns?

Oh these times...

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

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, Freddy 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)

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

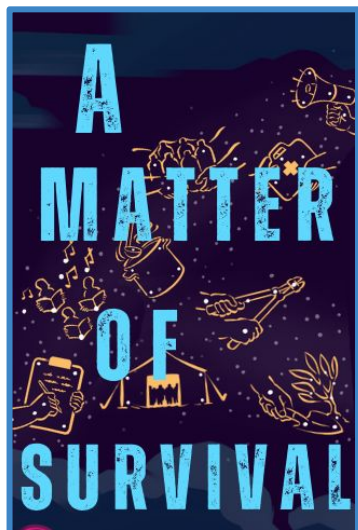
New Unsettling Force Medley

By Charon Hribar, Jonathan Lykes, and Steff Reed

We've got nothing to lose
but our chains

We're the Freedom Church
of the Poor,
we're uniting like never
before

We're a new unsettling force
and we're powerful



Comrade

By Jonathan Lykes

Comrade: A song for collective survival in direct action, Written by Jonathan Lykes of BYP100 (Black Youth Project 100), this song emerged from his experience participating in nonviolent direct action on October 24, 2015 as leaders from multiple organizations including BYP 100, Assata's Daughters, We Charge Genocide, [#Not1More](#), and Organized Communities Against Deportations came together to protest the International Association of Chiefs of Police conference in Chicago. [#StopTheCops](#) and [#FundBlackFutures](#), was organized to protest the state-sanctioned violence perpetrated against "Black folks who are poor, women, formerly incarcerated, working class, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming, differently abled, and/or undocumented." Those gathered demanded that "our lives, our communities and our futures be made a priority" and that millions spent on policing instead be used to create sustainable communities. Comrade encapsulates the spirit of camaraderie, resistance, and collective joy that defines BYP100's approach and was lifted up by those who were arrested for taking action to resist structural and state-sanctioned violence. **Shared via The Black Joy Experience Resource Guide By Black Youth Project 100**

Time will leave and time will grieve
Time will leave and we'll believe
Every day I see the light
Every day I'll see your light
We will never compromise and
We will always be surprised

Cuz you are everything to me
Always find the strength in me

Comrade
I will deem you comrade
I will deem you comrade
Because we are connected
Because we are connected

Chosen
I will call you chosen
I will call you chosen
Chosen family
Chosen family

Angel called me in the middle of the night
World paused it wasn't right
Anxiety flew through the sky
Death came whispering in disguise

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

No One is Getting Left Behind (This Time)

By Joshua Blaine

Josh 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
We get there together or never get there at all

(Arabic Chant used during Ceasefire March)

Hurra hurra falastine
Hurra hurra falastine
Hurra hurra falastine
Hurra hurra falastine

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

Ad libs / repetitions:

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

Voices of Resistance Medley

This medley was created at a cultural organizing retreat in August 2024, hosted by the Kairos Center and the NYS Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival at Bethany Arts Center. The retreat brought together song leaders, musicians, organizers, and media makers from the Kairos Center, NYS Poor People's Campaign, Highlander Research & Education Center, Dream Defenders, the SSING Network, and the NYS Media Team.



Text by Aurora Levins Morales

Artwork by Ricardo Levins Morales

Go Tell It On the Mountain

Remixed by Jonathan Lykes, Charon Hribar, and Ciara Taylor

“Go Tell It on the Mountain” is a powerful African American spiritual first published by John Wesley Work Jr., a noted musicologist connected to the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Rooted in the tradition of liberation songs, it was famously adapted and sung by Mississippi sharecropper and Civil Rights organizer Fannie Lou Hamer, who proclaimed, “Go tell it on the mountain, to let my people go.” Her rendition wove together the prophetic call for freedom with the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement.

From the mountain high
To the valley low
Gotta organize, gotta organize yeah

Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
Gotta let our people know

Up Over My Head

Betty Mae Fikes

March or Rally

“Up Over My Head” is a song that comes out of the gospel tradition. It was popularized during the Civil Rights Movement by SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) Freedom Singer - Bettie Mae Fikes. Bettie Mae Fikes was a founding member of the Freedom Singers, who used song as an essential tool to empower and educate audiences about civil rights issues during the Civil Rights Movement of the 60’s.

Up over my head
I see **freedom** in the air
Up over my head
I see freedom in the air
Up over my head
I see freedom in the air
And I really do believe
I said I really do believe
A change is coming out there

Up over my head
I see justice..., I see peace..., I see power..., I see hope..., I see change...

Set It Right Again

By Ana Hernandez

March or Rally

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

Mi Unica (call + response)

By the Peace Poets

March

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

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody

March or Rally

This song, adapted from the spiritual “Don’t Let Nobody Turn You Around”, was first introduced by Reverend Ralph Abernathy to organizers of the Albany Movement at Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1962. The song was quickly taken up and used by activists willing to face arrest, and worse, in order to bring about the desegregation of bus and train stations, as well as other public facilities in Albany, GA. As an example of the song’s significance as an adaptable freedom song, lyrics originally included references to the now-historical adversaries to integration in Albany like Captain Pritchett, Mayor Kelly, and the town legislature’s injunction on public protest (“ain’t gonna let no injunction turn me around...”). The song has since been updated by the Poor People’s Campaign as a way to face down the powerful few who act as obstacles to the many who strive for justice and equality for all.

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round,
Turn me round, turn me 'round.
Ain't gonna let nobody, turn me 'round.
I'm gonna keep on a walkin', keep on a talkin',
Marching up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let voter suppression
Ain't gonna let racism turn me 'round
Ain't gonna let no poverty
Ain't gonna let no war economy
Ain't gonna let no Congress

That's How the Light Gets In

By Leonard Cohen, Adapted by Dream Defenders

Forget your perfect offering
Just ring the bells that still can ring
There is a crack, 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