

Journal
of
the
March
1968

but a poem that attempts to give light on the strike, the march, and the changing riot.

I felt that if I wrote a paper, the truth could not be called exactly the truth, maybe because of my race or my minor prejudices. So I decided to write a poem.

This poem is not scholarly written or beautifully rhymed, but its the way I feel and I hope you receive the meaning I'm trying to convey.

Only God Knows

E.V.-2

It was the 12th day of February in the year 1968

I turned on the radio and began the news a few minutes late,

But I heard the news reporter distinctively say "The Sanitation Workers went on strike today, they are striking for better working conditions, higher wages, and the like,

And until they receive these basic job requirements they will remain on strike."

The true origin of the strike, is like the cause of colds. Man might say what he thinks, but only God knows.

Several weeks later the issue remained unsettled, tempers grew hot as boiling water in a kettle.

A number of mass meetings were held to obtain the sympathizers' support,

In these meetings were explained what they were striking for and things of this sort.

The meetings grew larger and better each blessed night,

And on March the 18th God's people beheld a glorious sight.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a non-violent man,

Who came to give his support of the workers' stand.

As Rev. King, "A Moses in our time,"

entered Mason Temple his presence was to many an inspirational sign.

He walked toward the platform and no one their joy could keep,

For the feelings he displayed were so humble and so meek.

In his address he spoke of the accumulated garbage, but proposed that sympathizers would General Park

He also planned an enormous demonstration, in which he solicited every ones co-operation.

The time, date and place of the march was set. And Rev. King would arrive the day before the march by jet.

On Thursday before the alleged Friday's mass demonstration, it rained, sleeted, the snowed in great accumulation.

No one had ever witnessed weather like this before! But there was something about it we should adore. It didn't snow because man for it had prayed.

But because God wanted the march to be delayed.

Why then on Thursday did the sky drop 17 inches of snow just as you, I have my beliefs, but only God knows.

The march was postponed and set for another date. I believe it was the following Thursday March the 28th. The march began and had gone several blocks.

When young militants began to break windows with sticks + rocks. They destroyed stores on Beale from Third St. almost to Main. But out of all of this stealing and destruction, "What was gained?"

The policemen, after standing by as teenagers bought liquor right before their face

Finally decided, after the looting had started, to use their mace. The mace did a good job, just as a pen would to write a letter.

But for a greater effect their clubs and guns seemed to be better.

What ignited the so-called riots? Was it the intoxicated kids, the looters, the black powerist or the sight of the beautiful clothes.

We can believe what we may or say what we like but only God knows.

The policemen really earned their salaries that day because they did a wonderful job, I need not to say. There were a few comments made about their personality and an enormous amount of complaints of police brutality.

As this time or is this heresay
Hell the police and God know this very day.

Four thousand National Guardsmen were called to Memphis right away,

And were paid approximately seven thousand dollars per day.

If the city of Memphis can pay that much per day, No you think they could raise the Sanitation Workers pay?

I didn't say anything about our mayor elect, Because I might say something I would later regret, I don't think the mayor should receive all the blame, But only the credit for contributing to the flame.

In order to keep the truth moving just as the wheels of time rolls,

I conclude by saying, the truth and the facts
ONLY GOD KNOWS.