

E.Y. – 1

This (illegible) paper on the riot itself but a poem that attempts to give light on the strike, the march, and the climaxing riot.

I felt that if I wrote a paper that 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 writer or beautifully rhymed, but it's the way I feel and I hope you receive the meaning I'm trying to convey.

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E.Y. – 2

Only God Knows

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

I turned on the radio and got the news a few minutes late

But I heard the news reporter distinctly 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 meeting 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 behold 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 due time,”

Entered Mason Temple his presence was to many an inspiration sign.

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

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

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E.Y. – 3

In his address he spoke little of the accumulated garbage,

But proposed that sympathizers (illegible).

He also planned an enormous demonstration,

In which he solicited every ones [sic] 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 snow in great accumulation.

No one had ever witnessed weather like this before,

But there was something about it we should of [sic] done

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 and rocks.

They destroyed stores on Beale from third St. almost to Main,

But out of all 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 better.

But for a greater effect their clubs and guns (illegible) to do better

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E.Y. – 4

What ignited the so-called riot? Was it the intoxicated kids, the Invaders, 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.

Is this true or is this heresy?

(Illegible) the police and God know this very day.

Four thousand National Guardsmen were called to Memphis right away,

And were pair approximately seven thousand dollars per day.

If the city of Memphis can pay that much per day,

Do you think they would 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 it by saying, the truth and the facts

ONLY GOD KNOWS.

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