



a poem by maya angelou

HIS DAY

IS DONE

A TRIBUTE TO THE
LIFE AND
CONTRIBUTIONS
OF NELSON MANDELA

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His day is done.
Is done.

The news came on the wings of a wind
Reluctant to carry its burden.

Nelson Mandela's day is done.

The news, expected and still unwelcome
Reached us in the United States and
suddenly

Our world became somber.
Our skies were leadened.

His day is done.

We see you, South African people
Standing speechless at the slamming
Of that final door
Through which no traveler returns.

Our spirits reach out to you
Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer

We think of you
And your Son of Africa,
Your father
Your One More Wonder of the World.

We send our souls to you
As you reflect upon
Your David armed with
A mere stone facing down
The Mighty Goliath.

Your Man of strength, Gideon
Emerging Triumphant

Although born into the brutal embrace of
Apartheid
Scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism,
Unjustly imprisoned
In the bloody maws of South African
dungeons.

Would the man survive?
Could the man survive?

His answer strengthened men and women
Around the world.

In the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas
On the Golden Gate Bridge in San
Francisco,
In Chicago's loop
In New Orleans Mardi Gras
In New York City's Times Square
We watched as the hope of Africa sprang
Through the prison's doors.

His stupendous heart intact,
His gargantuan will
Hale and hearty.

He had not been crippled by brutes
Nor was his passion for the rights
Of human beings
Diminished by twenty-seven years of
imprisonment.

Even here in America
We felt the cool
Refreshing breeze of freedom
When Nelson Mandela took
The seat of Presidency
In his Country
Where formerly he was not even allowed to
vote.

We were enlarged by tears of pride
As we saw Nelson Mandela's
Former prison guards
Invited, courteously, by him to watch
From the front rows
His inauguration.

We saw him accept
The world's award in Norway
With the grace and gratitude
Of Solon in Ancient Grecian Courts
And the confidence of African Chiefs
From ancient royal stools.

No sun outlasts its sunset
But will rise again
And bring the dawn

Yes, Mandela's day is done,

Yet we, his inheritors
Will open the gates wider
For reconciliation.

And we will respond
Generously to the cries
Of the Blacks and Whites,
Asians, Hispanics,
The poor who live piteously
On the floor of our planet.

He has offered us understanding
We will not withhold forgiveness
Even from those who do not ask.

Nelson Mandela's day is done

We confess it in tearful voices
Yet we lift our own to say

Thank You.

Thank You, Our Gideon.
Thank You, Our David.
Our great courageous man.

We will not forget you.
We will not dishonor you.
We will remember and be glad
That you lived among us

That you taught us
And
That you loved us
All!