

Mandela

Beneath a cross his mother wept
As naked hung the son of man.
His words, "Forgive them," whispered low,
On his disciples' lips lived on,
Envoys, ambassadors of Peace.

"I have a dream" resounded still
from Lincoln's chiseled marble form,
and ordinary people wept
as on a motel balcony
lay Martin, bleeding, hushed, serene.

Embraced by leaping pyre flames
Ignited by a mad man's rage,
Mohandas without anger smiled,
Did not so much as lift a hand,
God in his heart and on his lips.

Mandela, freed from prison's chains,
spurned retribution and revenge,
showed mercy to his prison guards,
and over jagged shards of hate
built Reconciliation Road.

Mandela's thin brown body lay,
Extolled by presidents and kings,
then wove a path in high estate
through folk linked arm in arm,
in lines as long as China's epic Wall.

Humble people, bathed in tears,
Heard music loud and warm and clear.
Throughout the land rang three clear tones
From tolling bells in steeped skies:
. . . Man-DEL-a . . . Man-DEL-a . . . Man-DEL-
a . . .

Six-winged angels marked his path
As Nelson scaled celestial heights,
Still overcoming dark with light.
Mandela's star joined Jesus' star
And Gandhi's star and Martin's star.

