



Home

by Hannah L. Drake and Kentucky Students

My Old Kentucky home

We are more than Derby and horses and bourbon

Plain, outdated, old times that have left many feeling stuck and depressed

We are more than nostalgia reminiscent of a time where some sipped

Disappointment over chilled ice

Unwelcomed to enter the front door as if we were invisible

We were embarrassed and confused

Because this is our home too

Although at times we are conflicted

Kentucky is not a place where any should feel unwelcomed.

Home should never feel distant.

Our roots are here, the bluegrass and banjo are as familiar as the beat of the drums

Our ancestors tilled the land, you see we are Kentucky too.

At times we have felt upset and unsafe...Home should be peace

But in isolation, we felt stuck, as our families were sold down the river to an unfamiliar place

The blue waters washing them away

We watched them drift into a land of nothing

We never got a chance to say goodbye

We prayed that one day if lucky, we would see them again.

We continued to plant seeds and till the land even as we felt



Uncomfortable, uninterested, and depressed.

We had no songs to sing about the good days

There was no time for Black Joy, no time to be happy or gay,

We were left unamused and hopeless

Nervous and uneasy that at dawn we would be torn apart from the families we loved

We sing songs in a foreign land, adaption meant survival, trying desperately to cover our sadness with hymns

But there are times when it is ok to weep

Tears ain't nothing but liquid prayers

And we prayed that one day things would be different

If not then, when?

When is the time for Kentucky to face itself?

If we are going to be disturbed, I urge you to be disturbed by injustice

Be disturbed by suffering

Be annoyed by inequity

Be riled up enough to ask yourself, "What can my old Kentucky home be?"

Perhaps now is a time for us to pause

There is nothing wrong with tradition

But there are some things that are old timey and outdated

The danger is in remaining the same

The danger is in being afraid of improvement, in not meeting this moment that life has given us

The danger is in growing bored with fighting for change

The danger is in being ambivalent

People may be scared of change



Unsure of what the future may hold

But working together, in community is the adventure

It's what makes life fantastic, full of excitement and fun

It's what makes Kentucky weird and different and different is okay

Who are we to be judgmental?

Our greatest failure would be refusing to notice the ebb of the tides

We are a community that must embrace change

We can turn our chaos to calm

We can be a Kentucky where everyone feels a sense of dignity

Proud to say that they are Kentucky too

And when the sun shines there will be a brightness all the way from Louisville to the hills of Appalachia

Everything and everyone basking in all its glory

We shall not remain in the darkness, we are not nocturnal people

Let us step out into the light, into the warm

As Thomas Merton said, "How do I begin telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun?"

We can be a state improved

A state where everyone feels safe

A state where all things are equitable

A state where we all feel peaceful

A state that builds policy with justice at its foundation

A state where the health of my neighbor is just as important as mine

A state where we all can thrive and be successful



A state where we understand it is in our gathering not our separation that we achieve greatness and growth

A state transfigured

We can make those who feel invisible, visible

A place where the oppressed, are free

Where those unwelcomed, feel comforted

That is a home – where people are trustworthy enough to call friend

Home should never a distant place

Home is in our hearts

We carry Kentucky with us

Kentucky is us

This can be our old Kentucky home

If we desire it to be so

And finally, one day, all of us will feel at home...at last.