

# *Reflections* FOR NONVIOLENT COMMUNITY



A BOOK OF READINGS  
THE OAK RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE ALLIANCE  
FEBRUARY - MARCH 2021

## front cover:

**On the last Wednesday in November, OREPA marked 21 years of uninterrupted Sunday vigils at the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex. Due to the pandemic, we have a limit on attendance these days, and we maxed out for the anniversary—from left, Pam Hindle, Kevin Collins, Judy Ferl, Ed Best with Russell on leash (or maybe that's the other way around), Ralph Hutchison, Jim Ullrich and Betty Coleman.**

## About this booklet

This booklet grows from an intentional exploration of nonviolent community embarked upon by members of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance. It has since expanded to embrace many members of our peace community.

Our intention is to use the booklet to build spiritual community. Those who are using the book are asked to participate by contributing readings to it.‡

The common thread in these reflections is the struggle of human beings to improve the world. In OREPA, our struggle to end bomb production is part of that struggle. In these reflections, we join ourselves with the larger community that works to heal the world.

The reflection booklet has been provided free of charge to all who request it. We welcome donations—\$20 would cover the cost of paper, printing and mailing for one year—but they aren't required.

Each Thursday you will find the name of a member of the community who is using this booklet. This is an opportunity to bring that person and all those who work for peace into the light on that day.

‡ contributions, suggestions, requests can be sent to OREPA, P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831 or by e-mail to [orep@earthlink.net](mailto:orep@earthlink.net)

## sources

**Readings for this reflection booklet were contributed by Mary Dennis Lentsch and Linda Ewald. Thursday poetry from *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde* published by Norton.**

## **Monday, February 1**

1902: LANGSTON HUGHES BORN

1960: GREENSBORO, NC WOOLWORTH'S COUNTER SIT-IN

I tire so of hearing people say, "Let things take their course. Tomorrow is another day." I do not need my freedom when I'm dead. I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

~ Langston Hughes

## **Tuesday, February 2**

GROUNDHOG DAY

The truth is that the police reflect America in all of its will and fear, and whatever we might make of this country's criminal justice policy, it cannot be said that it was imposed by a repressive minority. The abuses that have flowed from these policies—the sprawling carceral state, the random detention of black people, the torture of suspects—are the product of democratic will. And so to challenge the police is to challenge the American people...

~ Ta-Nehisi Coates

## **Wednesday, February 3**

1965: SELMA, AL SCHOOLCHILDREN ARRESTED IN MASS PROTEST FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

A lot of people talk about how Black Lives Matter is a movement. It's not a movement. When you're black, it's not a movement. It's a lifestyle. This is a walk of life. When you wake up and you're black, that's what it is. This is who we are. We understand that.

~ LeBron James

Thursday, February 4  
Nicole Connelly

1913: ROSA PARKS BORN

Down Wall Street  
the students marched for peace  
Above, constructions workers looking on remembered  
how it was for them in the old days  
before their closed shop white security  
and daddy pays the bills  
so they climbed down the girders  
and taught their sons a lesson  
called Marx is a victim of the generation gap  
called I grew up the hard way so will you  
called  
the limits of a sentimental vision.

When the passion play was over  
and the dust had cleared on Wall Street  
500 Union workers together with police  
had mopped up Foley Square  
with 2000 of their striking sons  
who broke and ran  
before their fathers chains.

Look here Karl Marx  
the apocalyptic vision of amerika!  
Workers rise and win  
and have not lost their chains  
but swing them  
side by side with the billyclubs in blue  
securing Wall Street  
against the striking students.

~ Audre Lorde

## Friday, February 5

Surely the earth can be saved by all the people who insist on love.  
~ Alice Walker

## Saturday, February 6

1945: BOB MARLEY BORN

The function of freedom is to free someone else.  
~ Toni Morrison

## Sunday, February 7

People can cry much easier than they can change.  
~ James Baldwin

## Monday, February 8

1968: ORANGEBURG, SC MASSACRE KILLS 3 AND INJURES 69 PROTESTERS

1978: LONGEST MARCH BEGINS, SAN FRANCISCO TO WASHINGTON, DC

Rioting has the serious defect that it can be terminated by greater force. Conversely, nonviolence can mobilize numbers so huge there is no counterforce.  
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Tuesday, February 9

1944: ALICE WALKER BORN

1996: US REVEALS HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS ON 9,000 SUBJECTS

Anyone can observe the Sabbath. But making it holy surely takes the rest of the week.  
~ Alice Walker

## Wednesday, February 10

I want you to understand that to be distanced, if only for a moment, from fear is not a passport out of the struggle. We will always be black.  
~ Ta-Nehisi Coates

Thursday, February 11  
Peggy Cowan

1967: A J MUSTE DIES | 1990: NELSON MANDELA RELEASED FROM 27 YEAR IMPRISONMENT

There are so many roots to the tree of anger  
that sometimes the branches shatter  
before they bear.

Sitting in Nedicks  
the women rally before they march  
discussing the problematic girls  
they hire to make them free.  
An almost white counterman passes  
a waiting brother to serve them first  
and the ladies neither notice nor reject  
the slighter pleasures of their slavery.  
But I who am bound by my mirror  
as well as my bed  
see causes in color  
as well as sex

and sit here wondering  
which me will survive  
all these liberations.

~ Audre Lorde

## Friday, February 12

1909: NAACP FOUNDED

What did it mean for a black woman to be an artist in our grandmothers' time? In our great-grandmothers' day? It is an answer cruel enough to stop the blood.

~ Alice Walker

## Saturday, February 13

2010: PEACE PILGRIMAGE FROM OAK RIDGE TO UNITED NATIONS DEPARTS Y12 IN OAK RIDGE

It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.

~ James Baldwin

## Sunday, February 14

1817: FREDERICK DOUGLASS BORN

The thing worse than rebellion is the thing that causes rebellion.

~ Frederick Douglass

## Monday, February 15

1920: SUSAN B ANTHONY BORN

We should strive to be post-racist—moving beyond cultural fascism and vicious narratives of racial privilege and superiority that tear at the fabric of *e pluribus unum*.

~ Michael Eric Dyson

## Tuesday, February 16

Look closely at the present you are constructing. It should look like the future you are dreaming.

~ Alice Walker

## Wednesday, February 17

Knowing how to be solitary is essential to the art of loving. When we can be alone, we can be with others without using them as a means of escape.

~Bell Hooks

Thursday, February 18  
Kim Williams and Steve Baggary

1931: TONI MORRISON BORN | 1934: AUDRE LORDE BORN

How the young attempt and are broken  
Differs from age to age  
We were brown free girls  
Love singing beneath their skin  
Sun in their hair in the eyes  
Sun their fortune  
The taste of their young boys' manhood  
Swelling like birds in their mouths.

In a careless season of power  
We wept out our terrible promise  
Now these are the children we try  
For temptations that wear our face  
And who came back from the latched cities of falsehood  
Warning—the road to Nowhere is slippery with our blood  
Warning—You need not drink the river to get home  
For we purchased bridges with our mothers' bloody gold  
We are more than kin who come to share  
Not blood, but the bloodiness of failure.

How the young are tempted and betrayed  
To slaughter or conformity  
Is a turn of the mirror  
Time's question only.

~ Audre Lorde

## Friday, February 19

The shocking fact is that while the government moves sluggishly, and in patchwork fashion, to achieve equal rights for all, in the daily conduct of its own massive economic and social activities it participates directly and indirectly in the denial of these rights.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Saturday, February 20

America understands itself as God's handiwork, but the black body is the clearest evidence that American is the work of people.

~ Ta-Nehisi Coates

## Sunday, February 21

1965: MALCOLM X ASSASSINATED

Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner, unless you eat some of what's on that plate. Being here in America doesn't make you an American.

~ Malcolm X

## Monday, February 22

If you lie to yourself about your own pain, you will be killed by those who will claim you enjoyed it.

~ Alice Walker

## Tuesday, February 23

1868: W E B DUBOIS BORN

Womanhood is hampered today because the world on which it is emerging is a world that tries to worship both virgins and mothers and in the end despises motherhood and despoils virgins.

~ W E B DuBois

## Wednesday, February 24

No matter how hard we try to ignore it, the mind always knows truth and wants clarity.

~ Toni Morrison

Thursday, February 25  
Bruce and Pat Baggarly

1912: 20,000 WOMEN STRIKE FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

Now rock the board in a fare-thee-well.  
Once we suffered dreaming  
Into the place where the children are playing  
their child's games  
where the children are hoping  
knowledge survives if  
unknowing  
they follow the game  
without winning.

Their fathers are dying  
back to the freedom of wide children playing  
at knowing  
their fathers are dying  
whose deaths will not free them  
of growing from knowledge  
of knowing  
when the game becomes foolish  
a dangerous pleading  
for time out of power

Quick  
children kiss us  
we are growing through dream.

~ Audre Lorde  
to *MLK. Jr.*

## **Friday, February 26**

You have to go the way your blood beats. If you don't live the only life you have, you won't live some other life, you won't live any life at all.

~ James Baldwin

## **Saturday, February 27**

1973: SECOND US SIEGE AT WOUNDED KNEE

The most basic activism we can have in our lives is to live consciously, living with a core of healthy self-esteem. You will face reality, you will not delude yourself.

~ Bell Hooks

## **Sunday, February 28**

1958: CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT LAUNCHED IN ENGLAND

If violence is wrong in America, violence is wrong abroad. If it is wrong to be violent defending black women and black children and black babies and black men, then it is wrong for America to draft us, and make us violent abroad in defense of her.

~ Malcolm X

## **Monday, March 1**

The one who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as the one who perpetrates it.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

## **Tuesday, March 2**

An act of love, a voluntary taking on oneself of some of the pain in the world, increases the courage and love and hope of all.

~ Dorothy Day

## **Wednesday, March 3**

I no longer believe we can change anything in the world until we first change ourselves.

~ Etty Hillesum

Thursday, March 4  
Mary and Jack Rockers

1917: JEANNETTE RANKIN FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO US CONGRESS

If you come as softly  
As wind within the trees  
You may hear what I hear  
See what sorrow sees.

If you come as lightly  
As threading dew  
I will take you gladly  
Nor ask more of you.

You may sit beside me  
Silent as a breath  
Only those who stay dead  
Shall remember death.

And if you come I will be silent  
Nor speak harsh words to you.  
I will not ask you why, now.  
Or how, or what you do.

We shall sit here softly  
Beneath two different years  
And the rich earth between us  
Shall drink our tears.

~ Audre Lorde

## Friday, March 5

1970: NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY ENTERS INTO FORCE

1991: LAST US CRUISE MISSILE REMOVED FROM GREENHAM COMMONS

The practice of peace and reconciliation is one of the most vital and artistic human actions.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

## Saturday, March 6

Some times our light goes out, but is blown into flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this light.

~ Albert Schweitzer

## Sunday, March 7

1965: SELMA TO MONTGOMERY CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH

The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls.

~ Elizabeth Cady Stanton

## Monday, March 8

The heart intuits evil and turns away from it. It is important to look at what truly touches the heart and moves it toward goodness and what closes it and makes it impenetrable.

~ Mary Daniel Turner

## Tuesday, March 9

I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.

~ Adrienne Rich

## Wednesday, March 10

1913: HARRIET TUBMAN DIES

Love from one being to another can only be that two solitudes come nearer, recognize and protect and comfort each other.

~ Han Suyin

Thursday, March 11  
Carol Dotterer

1899: ALBERT EINSTEIN BORN

The gulf between East and West is widening daily. Some people believe that no reconciliation is possible and that another World War must decide the issue; we scientists reply that it is no longer possible to decide any issue by such means—an atomic war will bring no real decision but only unprecedented death and devastation on both sides.

Such a time in history breeds defeatism and despair. But there are those among us who believe that man (sic) has within him the capacity to meet and overcome even the greatest tests of our times. What we must not lose, or we lose all, is our willingness to seek the truth and our courage to act upon the truth. If we maintain these, we cannot despair.

We scientists believe upon ample evidence that the time of decision is upon us—that what we do or fail to do within the next few years will determine the fate of our civilization... We call for a “higher realism that which recognizes that our fate is joined with that of our fellow humans throughout the world. In the shadow of the atomic bomb is has become apparent that all men (sic) are brothers. If we recognize this as truth and act upon this recognition, humankind may go forward to a higher plane of development. If the angry passions of a nationalistic world engulf us further, we are doomed.

~ Albert Einstein

## **Friday, March 12**

Making a decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body.

~ Elizabeth Stone

## **Saturday, March 13**

To see takes time like to have a friend takes time.

~ Georgia O'Keefe

## **Sunday, March 14**

A story may reveal truths to me as I write it. I don't put them there. I find them there as I work.

~ Ursula Le Guin

## **Monday, March 15**

I am certain that children always know more than they are able to tell, and that's the big difference between them and adults who, at best, know only a fraction of what they say. Children know everything with their whole being; we know only with our head.

~ Lacques Lusseyran

## **Tuesday, March 16**

1921: WAR RESISTERS INTERNATIONAL FOUNDED

2003: RACHEL CORRIE MURDERED IN GAZA STRIP

From quiet homes and first beginnings, out to undiscovered ends, there's nothing worth winning but laughter and the love of friends.

~ Hilaire Belloc

## **Wednesday, March 17**

When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life or in the life of another.

~ Helen Keller

Thursday, March 18  
Carol Gilbert

How the days went  
While you were blooming within me  
I remember each upon each—  
The swelling changed the planes of my body,  
And how you first fluttered, then jumped  
And I thought it was my heart.

How the days wound down  
And the turning of winter  
I recall, with you growing heavy  
Against the wind. I thought  
Now her hands  
Are formed, and her hair  
Has started to curl  
Now her teeth are done  
Now she sneezes.  
Then the seed opened  
I bore you one morning just before spring—  
My head rang like a firey piston  
My legs were towers between which  
A new world was passing.

From then  
I can only distinguish  
One thread within running hours  
You... Flowing through selves  
Toward you.

~ Audre Lorde

## **Friday, March 19**

2003: US ATTACKS BAGHDAD, STARTS SECOND GULF WAR

We can no longer view ourselves as isolated from our environment, and our thoughts as the working of an individual brain. As observers and creators, we are constantly remaking our world.

~ Lynn McTaggart

## **Saturday, March 20**

2004: TENS OF MILLIONS MARCH WORLDWIDE IN PROTEST OF US WAR IN IRAQ

When you act on behalf of something greater than yourself, you begin to feel it acting through you with a power greater than your own.

~ Joanna Macy

## **Sunday, March 21**

1960: SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE KILLS 69 IN SOUTH AFRICA

All lives are potentially great. Great lives are ordinary lives intensified.

~ Wilfred Peterson

## **Monday, March 22**

We must be a poetic community, offering explosive, concrete, subversive, critical images around which people can reorganize their lives.

~ Walter Bruggeman

## **Tuesday, March 23**

Nonviolence is not a dogma; it is a process.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

## **Wednesday, March 24**

1980: ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO ASSASSINATED IN EL SALVADOR

1999: US AND NATO BEGIN 78 DAY BOMBING OF SERBIA

A church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed—what gospel is that?

~ Oscar Romero

Thursday, March 25  
Kathy Boylan

I believe in you my son  
and I tremble  
but the whole earth is trembling  
and no one is talking  
more than 100,000 dead bodies  
in the strange land between us  
and still no word spoken  
but you share my sleep  
with a Kuwaiti girl  
impaled twice  
by the sprouting hatred of a conqueror  
whose face is hidden from me  
and by her brother  
who loathes the child she bears.

Dark incandescent winds blow  
the belch of smoldering oil wells  
around the world  
dimming my island sunsets  
mingling with the black smoke  
of Ellen Goodman's son  
aflake on the Amherst green.

In one month I celebrate  
the beginning of my second Saturn  
you were the gift of my first  
and I trust you beyond question

*In what do you believe?*

~ Audre Lorde

## **Friday, March 26**

1979: CAMP DAVID PEACE ACCORDS SIGNED

I believe hope is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals who deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history.

~ Albert Camus

## **Saturday, March 27**

Only when the spirit of peace awakens and takes possession of our hearts can humanity be saved from perishing.

~Albert Schweitzer

## **Sunday, March 28**

1979: THREE MILE ISLAND (PA) NUCLEAR REACTOR FAILURE

Managers are people who do things right. Leaders are people who do the right things.

~ Warren Bennis

## **Monday, March 29**

There are only two powers in the world, the power of the sword and the power of the spirit. In the long run, the sword will always be conquered by the spirit.

~ Napoleon

## **Tuesday, March 30**

Discovery is seeing what everyone else has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.

~ Albert Szent-Gyorg

## **Wednesday, March 31**

1927: CESAR CHAVEZ BORN

Patriotism is often an arbitrary veneration of real estate above principles.

~ George Jean Nathan

