

GRANDMOTHER SIDES - UNDERGROUND

Writer's Note - One of my goals when creating this story in 2010 was to portray our ancestors with as much dignity as possible in these tragic circumstances. Presenting them as smart, even though they may not have had formal education.

Though written in verse. The rhymes in the dialogue are not meant to be accented or emphasized. Rather spoken like prose.

GRANDMOTHER (72), Black, a frail elder with the strength of spirit that can only be born from hardship. Our storyteller.

(1913. A black GRANDMOTHER, (72), sits at the end of the long room in a rocking chair. She is frail and hunched, but has a strength in her that could only come from living through a tragedy. She sings quietly to herself.)

GRANDMOTHER

WE SLAVED AWAY ON MASTER'S LAND...

CHORUS/BGV (O.S.)

LET MY PEOPLE GO...

GRANDMOTHER

OPPRESSED SO HARD, WE COULD NOT STAND...

CHORUS/BGV (O.S.)

LET MY PEOPLE GO...

(GRANDMOTHER picks up a Negro newspaper next to her, it reads: HARRIET TUBMAN DIES.)

GRANDMOTHER

HARRIET IS DEAD AND CARRIED ON HOME.
HER SOUL HAS FLOWN, SHE'S WHERE SHE BELONGS
SHE MAY BE DEAD, BUT SHE'S NOT GONE.

Her story, I WILL LET MY PEOPLE KNOW.

(RUBY [10], her strong-willed granddaughter, enters the room in her nightgown behind GRANDMOTHER.)

RUBY

It's late granny. Why you out here all by yo'self?

(Sounds of slaves being whipped, dogs barking, voices yelling, gunshots ...)

GRANDMOTHER

Come, come child.

RUBY

Aren't you tired?

GRANDMOTHER

I got my mind fixed on somethin' else. Sit down and let me talk to ya.

RUBY

Granny... It's time for bed.

GRANDMOTHER

Child, I said sit down. We hadn't spoken 'bout this before. But, it's time that you learn. It's right here. Araminta done passed on.

GRANDMOTHER

WE NEED NOT ALWAYS WEEP AND MOURN...

CHORUS/BGV (O.S.)

LET MY PEOPLE GO...

GRANDMOTHER

AND WEAR THESE SLAVERY CHAINS FORLORN.

CHORUS/BGV (O.S.)

LET MY PEOPLE GO...

GRANDMOTHER

GO DOWN MOSES,
WAY DOWN IN EGYPT'S LAND.

GRANDMOTHER & CHORUS/BGV

TELL OLD PHARAOH,
TO LET MY PEOPLE GO.

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