Foot Notes on Equality

Karl Carter

I.
In the days when the sky crushed to the trees to the ground
And hope hung suspended from the branches
Strangled by the passion of the times
We moved beneath the heavens
Our backs doubled over
By unfinished fields yet to be tended
The land nourished us with her strength
The strength of our pain
The pain of our sorrow
The sorrow of our bondage

II.
Under the pale whiteness of the foreign sky
Africa’s rivers still flowed in our souls
And our roots sank into the bitter ground
Dawn and sunset merged
The years fled one after another
The old songs lost their meaning
Our folk tales their values
And the spirits of the ancestors
no longer dwelled within us
In the Southern concentration camps
Our lives ground raw, bleeding
Between the barbs of cotton and tobacco fields
----------------------waiting--------------------------
Our tired hands cried out for deliverance
For some it was in song
across the river
For others at night on foot
But Freedom came slow of foot
hard of heart and begrudgingly
It stank of garbage piles
welfare rolls
unemployment
rat droppings
broken plaster
Hunger in the children’s stomachs
The booming of Segregation
de facto, de jure
And always the promises of our forefathers and enslavers,
“We hold these truths
to be self evident that all men
are created equal.”