

Inevitable

*In the squares of the city - In the
shadow of the steeple
Near the relief office
I see my people
And some are grumblin'
and some are wonderin'
If this land's still made for you and me.*

This Land Is Your Land - Woody Guthrie

I volunteer with a woman who sees the colors in everything. And everyone. Thank God, considering some of the things we're witness to. It's true she is sometimes reminiscent of the Sixties, and around here that can be almost a profession. But rather than dope up and tune out, she gets up and helps out. One more language or cultural artifact doesn't bother her in the least. In fact, she welcomes the various hues of humanity and looks forward to whatever wave of people might be coming next over the horizon.

Recently we've had quite a few Mexicans come into our neighborhoods. I sometimes resent these basically good folks when they park cars in their front yards and leave electrified Madonna statues lit up on their front porches all night. But to her the Mexican families are just more colors on a palette. She looks closely at their Aztec heritage to see how it might add to our own culture. (Excepting human sacrifice, of course.)

I can't say I always share her enthusiasm as I'm tossed about on a sea of languages, cooking smells and different perspectives on life. But I do take a lesson from her attitude. And I realize that as a descendant of immigrants myself, this land will always have to be *our* land. It can never exclusively be *my* land. Because, as the poet said, "Each of us is inevitable."

You, whoever you are!...

by Walt Whitman

**All you continentals of Asia,
Africa, Europe, Australia,
indifferent of place!
All you on the numberless
islands of the archipelagoes of
the sea!
All you of centuries hence
when you listen to me!
All you each and everywhere
whom I specify not, but include
just the same!
Health to you! good will to you
all, from me and America sent!
Each of us is inevitable,
Each of us is limitless, each of
us with his or her right upon
the earth,
Each of us allow'd the eternal
purports of the earth,
Each of us here as divinely as
any is here.**

from Leaves of Grass, 1856

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