

## Let's Go To the Mountaintop

*There was a man who had a dream  
Whose story I want to bring  
Tho' his skin was black, that could not hold back  
The junior Martin Luther King.*

*He dreamed of the day when all God's children  
Would stand together hand in hand  
And be united in brotherhood  
And love throughout the land.*

*He led many marches for his people  
To gain equality  
And tho' thrown in jail, he still marched on  
And did it peacefully.*

*"Non-violence is the way," he said  
And the world began to realize  
Maybe he was right, for he received  
That great Nobel Peace Prize!*

*He knew the dangers and the threats  
And still he would not stop  
He wasn't worried about a thing  
For he had been to the Mountaintop.*

*He struggled long and hard for freedom  
For people everywhere  
It was for this cause that he was shot  
When a bullet hit the air.*

*He left behind a beautiful dream  
Which will never be out of date.  
Let's all reach out and help each other  
Before it is too late.*

*His birthday is now a national holiday  
For all Americans, not just for some  
We can all join hands and shout together  
"YES, WE SHALL OVERCOME."*

--Mosetta Rose London



## Suggested Activity

Have students interview a family member to learn about their family histories. When did their ancestors come to the country and from where? Where did they live once they arrived? Students may also gather photographs, recipes, objects or artwork from their relatives that represent some part of their family background. If students are unable to do research with family members, guide them in finding and researching the story of another family — either through talking to people or seeking a story in books.

During this time of exploring, the teacher can introduce the students to poems that cross cultures and to the notion of translation. The lesson may conclude with oral presentations of family stories and/or with creative projects — creating cultural collages, writing poems. As part of an oral presentation or what they will turn in, students should include a poem, perhaps one written in the language of their ancestors, or any poem that somehow reflects their or their families' experience. If a student chooses a poem written in another language, perhaps he or she (or a parent) will be able to read it aloud to the class in that language. If there is an English translation, they should include or read it as well. If not, perhaps the student or someone they know can try to translate the poem into English. If a student is not able to read a poem or its translation aloud, they can show the other students what it looks like on the page. Sharing poems and family stories is a personal place for students to begin addressing broader questions of culture, and may lead well into other cultural lessons.

### **Poems with letters that make family history or cultural connections in Americans'**

#### **Favorite Poems:**

"Refugee Blues" by W.H. Auden

"Eternity" by William Blake

"The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke

"Address to a Haggis" by Robert Burns

"The City" by C. P. Cavafy

from "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"Proem: to Brooklyn Bridge" by Hart Crane



## Suggested Activity (cont'd)

"Immigrants" by Robert Frost

"Birches" by Robert Frost

"Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden

"Do You See the Town?" by Hugh von Hofmannsthal

"Mintrel Man" by Langston Hughes

"Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes

"Driving Montana" by Richard Hugo

"The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus

"A Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"Our Land" by Yannis Ritsos

"Fern Hill" by Dylan Thomas

"A Far Cry from Africa" by Derek Walcott

### **Cultural Curriculum Resources Suggested by Several Teachers:**

*Oral History Resources* (Book Links, March 1998)

### **Books**

*Leon's Story* by Leon Tillage

*I Was Dreaming to Come to America: Ellis Island Oral History Project* edited by  
Veronica Lawler

*Lasting Echoes: An Oral History of Native American People* by Joseph Bruchac

*Oh, Freedom!: Kids Talk about the Civil Rights Movement with the People Who Made It  
Happen* by Casey King and Linda Barret Osborne

*Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories* edited by  
Ellen Levine



## Suggested Activity (cont'd)

### Video

Ancestors (10-part PBS series) Companion Internet site: [www.kbyu.org/ancestors](http://www.kbyu.org/ancestors)

### Heritage and Immigration: A Beginning Bibliography

Aldan, Daisy. *Poems from India (sel.)*. NY: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969.

Barnstone, William and Bamstone, Tony (ed.). *Literatures of Asia, Africa, and African Americans*. Prentice Hall, 1999.

Bryan, Ashley. *Ashley Bryan's ABC of African American Poetry*. NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1997.

Delacre, L. *Arroz Con Leche: Popular Songs and Rhymes from Latin America*. NY: Scholastic, 1989.

Feelings, Tom. *Soul Looks Back in Wonder*. NY: Dial Books, 1993.

Fletcher, Louise, "The Land of Beginning Again."

Hughes, Langston. *The Block: Poems by Langston Hughes*. NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Viking, 1995.

*In the Eyes of the Cat: Japanese Poetry for All Seasons*.

Lewis, Richard (ed.). *Out of the Earth We Sing: Poetry and Songs of Primitive People of the World*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1968.

Lomax, Alan and Abdul, Raoul (ed.). *3000 Years of Black Poetry*. NY: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1970.

Ho, M. *Maples in the Mist: Children's Poems from the Tang Dynasty*. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Harlem: A Poem by Walter Dean Myers*. NY: Scholastic, 1997.

Nye, Naomi Shabib (sel.). *This Same Sky: A Collection of Poems from the World*. NY: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996.



## Suggested Activity (cont'd)

Nye, Naomi, Shabib. *The Space Between Our Footsteps: Poems and Paintings from the Middle East*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Philips, Neil (ed.). *The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Plotz, Helen (sel). *Poems from the German*. NY: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Smith, William Jay (sel.). *Poems from France*. NY: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Soto, Gary. *A Fire in My Hands*.

Soto, Gary. *Cool Salsa*.

Sneve, V. *Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth*. NY: Holiday House, 1989.

Sullivan (ed.). *America in Poetry*.

Talbot, Toby (coll.) *Copias: Folk Poems in Spanish and English*. NY: Four Winds Press, 1972.

Wong, Janet. *Good Luck Gold*. NY: Margaret K. McEiderry, 1994.

Wong, Janet. *A Suitcase of Seaweed*. NY: Margaret K. McEiderry, 1994.

*Based on lessons by Mary Bourque, Rita Delaney (Clark Avenue School, Chelsea, MA) Theresa Creaney (Smith School, Danvers, MA), Morgan May (Graduate Student, Boston University School of Education) Jennifer McConathy (Ben-Hem School, Natick, MA), and Margaret Voss (Marblehead Public Schools).*

Taken from <http://www.favoritepoem.org/forteachers/lessonplans-links/poetryandculture.html>

Photo of Dr. King taken from <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/memphis-v-mlk/images/king-portrait.gif>

