

# His Day is Done

*Maya Angelou*

His day is done.  
Is done.  
The news came on the wings of a wind  
Reluctant to carry its burden.  
Nelson Mandela's day is done.  
The news, expected and still unwelcome  
Reached us in the United States and suddenly  
Our world became somber.  
Our skies were leadened  
His day is done.  
We see you, South African people  
Standing speechless at the slamming  
Of that final door  
Through which no traveler returns.  
Our spirits reach out to you  
Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer  
We think of you  
And your Son of Africa,  
Your Father  
Your One More Wonder of the World.  
We send our souls to you  
As you reflect upon  
Your David armed with  
A mere stone facing down  
The Mighty Goliath,  
Man of strength Gideon,  
Emerging triumphant  
Although born into the brutal embrace of Apartheid  
Scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism,  
Unjustly imprisoned  
In the bloody maws of South African dungeons.  
Would the man survive?  
Could the man survive?  
His answer strengthened men and women  
Around the world.  
In the Alamo in San Antonio, TX  
On the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco,  
In Chicago's loop  
In New Orleans Mardi Gras  
In New York City's Times Square  
We watched as the hope of Africa sprang  
Through the prison's doors  
His stupendous heart in tact  
His gargantuan will  
Hale and hearty  
He had not been crippled by brutes  
Nor was his passion for the rights  
Of human beings

Diminished by twenty-seven years of imprisonment  
Even here in America  
We felt the cool  
Refreshing breeze of freedom  
When Nelson Mandela took  
The seat of the Presidency  
In his Country  
Where formally he was not even allowed to vote  
We were enlarged by tears of pride  
As we saw Nelson Mandela's  
Former prison guards  
Invited, courteously, by him to watch  
From the front rows  
His inauguration.  
We saw him accept  
The world's award in Norway  
With the grace and gratitude  
Of the Solon in Ancient Roman Courts  
And the confidence of African Chiefs  
From ancient royal stools.  
No sun outlasts its sunset  
But will rise again  
And bring the dawn  
Yes, Mandela's day is done,  
Yet we, his inheritors  
Will open the gates wider  
For reconciliation and we will respond  
Generously to the cries  
Of the Blacks and Whites,  
The Asian, the Hispanic,  
The poor who live piteously  
On the floor of our planet  
He has offered us understanding  
We will not withhold forgiveness  
Even from those who do not ask  
Nelson Mandela's day is done  
We confess it in tearful voices  
Yet we lift our own to say  
Thank You.  
Thank You, Our Gideon.  
Thank You, Our David.  
Our great courageous man  
We will not forget you  
We will not dishonor you  
We will remember and be glad  
That you lived among us  
That you taught us  
And  
That you loved us  
All!