

Maya Angelou

"Pledge Youth Poem"

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A Pledge to Rescue Our Youth

by

Maya Angelou

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Young women, young men of color, we add our voices
to the voices of your ancestors who speak to you over
ancient seas and across impossible mountain tops.

Come up from the gloom of national neglect, you have
already been paid for.

Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice, you
owe

no racial debt to history.

The blood of our bodies and the prayers of our souls
have bought you a future

free from shame and bright beyond the telling of it.

We pledge ourselves and our resources to seek for you
clean and well-furnished schools, safe and non-
threatening streets, employment which makes use of
your talents, but does not degrade your dignity.

You are the best we have.

You are all we have.

You are what we have become.

We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward.

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