

## Spirit of the Ancestors

It is not the first time  
I have had this thought because  
It's not the first time  
I sit in an audience, listening  
as the poet on stage invokes  
the spirit of Malcolm X.

And I don't want to sound disrespectful.  
It is a good poem—strong, honest,  
visionary, asking the question: “What  
ever happened to the revolution?”  
It's a positive, I believe,  
when our songs try to revive  
the spirit of Malcolm, or Martin,  
Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, John Brown,  
Marcus Garvey, Queen Mother Moore,  
Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba,  
Simon Bolivar, or  
any of the ancestors.

Still, I sit here wondering: What  
would happen if we found a way  
to transform just one or two percent  
of the energy that goes into all of the poems,  
and all of the music,  
and all of the speeches,  
on all of the stages,  
in all of the theaters, clubs,  
and auditoriums,  
presented by all the honest prophets  
(ignoring, that is, the outright charlatans)  
plus all of the applause  
from all of their listeners,  
convert this into just a little  
“By any means  
necessary”?

Perhaps, I tell myself, you and I  
would be able to sit here today,  
not have to ask: “What  
ever happened to the revolution?”  
We would write poems about it in  
the present tense  
instead affirm—in a new  
and better sense—all the ways  
that we are able to dream.

Steve Bloom  
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