

THEY SAID

BY: ROBERTA W. GUTMAN

They told us that we could not be
Successful, rich and bright,
Because the color of our skin
Brought welfare, shame and fright.

They said that all Black children,
Just couldn't make the grades
Because we aren't the smartest,
We sing, play sports, wear "fades".

They called us lazy, dumb, thus poor.
They said we'd earned our plight!
But only when we listened,
Did our day turn to night.

We acted out the things they said.
We scorned our own who tried.
We learned to play the "victim."
We lost our sense of pride.

Then out of Georgia came a King
Who some say God did send.
We worked and prayed and marched for things
Much longed for deep within.

Our pride returned quite quickly,
Success became a goal.
"I am somebody" – we did shout
Who cares what we were told.

When King was called to heaven,
Tears could not drown our pain.
Did we only lose our leader?
Had we lost all that we'd gained?

Some went back to the "victim" state.
Some worked more than before.
Some vowed to keep His dream alive
By entering success's door.

I wonder which path you did take.
Would you be proud to say?
If redirection must take place,
Why don't you start today.

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