

stick around. And following the ignorant Negro preachers, we have thought that it was Godlike to turn the other cheek to the brute that was brutalizing us. Malcolm X, one of the most articulate exponents of the black Muslim philosophy, has said of your movement and your philosophy that it plays into the hands of the white oppressors. Because in the North where I grew up, the NAACP was fatally entangled with black class distinctions or illusions of the same, which repelled a Shushan boy like me. deal with the criminal state of Mississippi hour by hour and day by day to say nothing of night after night. all of the other brutal methods that are used without retaliating with violence, because they understand that one of the first principles of nonviolence is a willingness to be the recipient of violence while never inflicting violence upon another. The film's icy brutality both scared me and strengthened me. Because Uncle Tom refuses to take vengeance in his own hands, he was not a hero for me. Heroes as far as I could see were white, and not merely because of the movies, but because of the land in which I lived, of which movies were simply a reflection. I think, though, that we can be sure that the vast majority of Negroes who engage in the demonstrations and who understand the nonviolent philosophy will be able to face dogs and... There were, for example, Steppenfetchit and Willie Best and Nantan Moreland, all of whom, rightly or wrongly, I loathed. For it is also possible that their comic bug-eyed terror contained the truth concerning a terror by which I hoped never to be engulfed. I was not responsible for raising money or deciding how to use it. I was not responsible for strategy controlling prayer meetings, marches, petitions, voting registration drives. There's no sun up in the sky, stormy weather Since my man and I ain't together Keeps raining all the time As a member of the NAACP, Medgar was investigating the murder of a black man, which had occurred months before. White people are endlessly demanding to be reassured that Birmingham is really on Mars. They are happy to hear you talk about love for the oppressor because this disarms the Negro and fits into the stereotype of the Negro as a neat, turning the other cheek sort of creature. As concerns Malcolm and Martin, I watched two men coming from unimaginably different backgrounds, whose positions originally were poles apart, driven closer and closer together. I hoped that they wouldn't forget me. I missed Harlem Sunday mornings and fried chicken and biscuits. I didn't do it. I didn't do it. I didn't do it. I didn't do it. He is terrified because a young white girl in a small southern town has been raped and murdered and her body has been found on the premises of which he is the janitor. I despised and feared those heroes because they did take vengeance into their own hands. Leaving aside all the physical facts that one can quote, leaving aside rape or murder, leaving aside the bloody catalog of oppression, which we are in one way too familiar with already, what this does to the subjugated is it destroys his sense of reality. Malcolm was sitting in the first row of the hall, bending forward at such an angle that his long arms nearly caressed the ankles of his long legs, staring up at me. I very nearly panicked. Each of these men, through his actions and his words, but with vastly different manner and means, is a spokesman for some segment of the Negro people today. or a religious Uncle Tom who is doing the same thing today to keep Negroes defenseless in the face of attack that Uncle Tom did on the plantation to keep those Negroes defenseless in the face of the attack of the Klan in that day. Neither waffles, ice cream, hot dogs, baseball, majorettes, movies, nor the Empire State Building, nor Coney Island, nor the Statue of Liberty, nor the Daily News, nor Times Square. Yet, I remember being sent to the store sometime later, and a colored woman who, to me, looked exactly like Joan Crawford was

buying something. I took Bill Miller as she was, or as she appeared to be to me. She, too, anyway, was treated like a nigger, especially by the cops, and she had no love for landlords. Yet, I had no reservations at all concerning the terror of the Black Janitor and they won't forget. This means, in the case of an American Negro, born in that glittering Republic, and in the moment you are born, since you don't know any better, Every stick and stone and every face is white, and since you have not yet seen the mirror, you suppose that you are too. It means briefly, for example, seeing Merly Evers and the children, those children who are children no longer. I was sufficiently astute to distrust. Malcolm might be the torch that white people claim he was, though in general, white America's evaluations of these matters would be laughable and even pathetic. I was not a member of any Christian congregation because I knew that they had not heard and did not live by the commandment, love one another as I love you. I saw the sheriffs, the deputies, the storm troopers more or less in passing. This was sometimes hard on my morale, but I had to accept as time wore on that part of my responsibility as a witness was to move as largely and as freely as possible, to write the story and to get it out. It seeks to be your protector in all matters within its jurisdiction. We've invited three men on the forefront of the Negro struggle to sit down and talk with us in front of the television camera. When Malcolm talks, one of the mesmerizing talks, they articulate for all the Negro people who hear them, who listen to them, they articulate their suffering. to the vast, heedless unthinking. Most of the white Americans I've ever encountered, really, had a Negro friend or a Negro maid or somebody in high school. You know, the question is really a kind of apathy and ignorance, which is a price to be paid for segregation. Missed the life which had produced me and nourished me and paid for me. Now, though I was a stranger, I was home. fascinated by the movement on and off the screen. I was aware that Joan Crawford was a white lady. She looked down at me with so beautiful a smile, and I was not even embarrassed, which was rare for me. By this time, I had been taken in hand by a young white school teacher named Bill Miller, a beautiful woman, very important to me. She gave me books to read and talked to me about the books and about the world, about Ethiopia and Italy and the German Third Reich. And these days, no one resembling my father has yet made an appearance on the American cinema scene. I think that it was a Black actor named Clinton Rosemond who played this part. The role of the janitor is small, yet the man's face bangs in my memory until today. They thought vengeance was theirs to take. We've made a legend out of a massacre. It comes as a great shock around the age of five or six or seven to discover that Gary Cooper killing off the Indians when you were rooting for Gary Cooper, that the Indians were you. It comes as a great shock to discover that the country, which is your birthplace, and to which you owe your life and your identity, has not in its whole system of reality evolved any place for you. My dear Jay, you must, it is to be hoped, be as curious as I am concerning the execution of this book project. It means seeing Betty Shabazz, Malcolm's widow, and the five younger children. It means exposing myself as one of the witnesses to the lives and deaths of their famous fathers. In the same way, though, for different reasons, that I never became a Black Panther because I did not believe that all white people were devils and I did not want young Black people. White people are astounded by Birmingham. They don't want to realize that there is not one step morally or actually between Birmingham and Los Angeles. By the time each died, their positions had become virtually the same position. It can be said, indeed, that Martin picked up Malcolm's burden, articulated the vision which

Malcolm had begun to see and for which he paid with his life, and that Malcolm was one of the people Martin saw on the mountaintop. What your role is in this country and what your future is in it. How precise are you going to reconcile? We were segregated from the schoolhouse door. Therefore, he doesn't know, he really does not know what it was like for me to leave my house, leave school and go back to Harlem. He doesn't know how Negroes live. Again, you know, that, like, again, like most white Americans I have, you know, encountered, they have no, I'm sure they have nothing whatever against Negroes. And you tell it to him in the morning when his mother goes out of here to take care of somebody else's kids, and tell it to me. when we want some curtains or some drapes and you sneak out of here and go work in somebody's kitchen. Lorraine Hansberry would not be very much younger than I am now if she were alive. If there was in this some illusion, there was also much truth. In the years in Paris, I had never been homesick for anything American. I missed the style, that style possessed by no other people in the world. I missed the way the dark face closes. I missed, in short, my connections. The movie is Dance, Fools, Dance. It took me to see plays and films. Oh It is certainly because of Bill Miller, who arrived in my terrifying life so soon, that I never really managed to hate white people. I was a child, of course, and therefore unsophisticated. Can't get him up. Lazy rich, I can't get him. not entirely true. It seemed to me that they lied about the world I knew and debased it, and certainly I did not know anybody like them as far as I could tell. My countrymen were my enemy. I suspect that all these stories are designed to reassure us that no crime was committed. It is a matter of research and journeys. I begin in September when I go on the road. It means going back to Atlanta to sell my... Birmingham. It means seeing Coretta Scott King and Martin's children. I know that Martin's daughter, whose name I don't remember, and Malcolm's oldest daughter, whose name is Attila, are both in the theater and apparently are friends. A clod of witnesses, as old Saint Paul once put it. I first met Malcolm X. I saw Malcolm before I met him. And this legend, since I was a Harlem street boy. Did not these evaluations have such wicked results? And so I stumbled through my lecture. But perhaps that field trip will help us define what I mean by the word witness. I was to discover that the line which separates a witness from an actor is a very thin line indeed. Nevertheless, the line is real. I was not, for example, a black Muslim. And I was not a member of the NAACP. I did not have to sweat cold sweat after decisions involving hundreds of thousands of lives. We should all be concerned with but one goal, the eradication of crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is as close to you as your nearest telephone. They don't want to believe, still, less to act on the belief that what is happening in Birmingham is happening all over the country. Well, I don't think of love as, in this context, as emotional body. But I think of love as something strong and that organizes itself into powerful, direct action. That has a great deal of difference between non-resistance to evil and non-violent resistance. Martin Luther King is just the 20th century, or modern Uncle Tom. Medgar was too young to have seen this happen, though he hoped for it and would not have been surprised. But Medgar was murdered first. I was older than Medgar, Malcolm and Martin. I was raised to believe that the eldest was supposed to be a model for the younger, and was of course expected to die first. That's Malcolm's great authority over any of his audiences. He corroborates their reality. yourself to your situation here and how you are going to communicate. cruel white majority, that you are here. I'm terrified at the moral apathy, the death of the heart, which is happening in my country. had rooted themselves for so long. I had

wishes on their conduct, not on what they say. But they never, or rarely, after school was over or whatever, came to my kitchen. That's what segregation means. I was in some way, in those years without entirely realizing it, the great black hope of the great white father. I was not a racist, or so I thought. Malcolm was a racist, or so they thought. All I want is to be able to stand in front of my boy, like my father never was able to do to me. I must sketch now the famous Bobby Kennedy meeting. That way, we said, it will be clear that whoever spits on that child. will be spitting on the nation. He didn't understand this either. It would be, he said, a meaningless moral gesture. We would like, said Lorraine, from you a moral commitment. He looked insulted, seemed to feel that he'd been wasting his time. But as you black, you're all brown. I had at last come home. All of these things had passed out of me. They might never have existed. And it made absolutely no difference to me if I never saw them again. But I missed my brothers and sisters and my mother. They made a difference. I wanted to be able to see them and to see their children. I missed the music. the way dark eyes watch, and the way when a dark face opens, a light seems to go everywhere. I'm about seven. I'm with my mother or my aunt. She was incredibly beautiful. to which no one else would have dreamed of taking a ten year old boy. Though God knows, I have often wished to murder more than one or two. Therefore, I began to suspect that white people did not act as they did because they were white. But for some other reason. Give me the police. Give me the police. Give me the police. and he looked a little like my father. Come on in, dumb. Nobody says you have, Tom, but they might. And yes, I understood that. I know how to do it, technically. And with you or without you, I will do it anyway. The road means my return to the South. And it means much, much more than that. I was giving a lecture somewhere in New York. I knew Malcolm only by legend. On the other hand, Malcolm had no reason to trust me either. with Malcolm never taking his eyes from my face. Had shown me letters from black people asking him to do this, and he had asked me to come with him. I was terribly frightened. I was never in town to stay. It belongs to you. Black people in this country have been the victims of violence at the hands of the white man for 400 years. Would you care to comment on Mr. X's belief? This is what I try to teach in the struggle in the South, that we are not engaged in a struggle that means we sit down and do nothing. Not one of these three lived to be forty. BOOM We need an organization that no one downtown loves. We need one that's ready and willing to take action, any kind of action, by any means necessary. The suffering which has been in this country so long denied. He tells them that they really exist, you know? And their days is one of them. When you wonder... These people. They really don't think I'm human. And this means that they have become themselves. More Monsters. And it comes as a great surprise to the Kennedy brothers and to everybody else in the country. That is, that's really not the question. You don't know what's happening on the other side of the world because you don't want to know. In fact, we were simply trapped in the same situation. Well, you tell that to my boy tonight, when you put him to sleep on the living room couch. All I want is to make a future for this family. At the time of the Bobby Kennedy meeting, she was 33. That was one of the very last times I saw her on her feet, and she died at the age of 34. I miss her so much. People forget how young everybody was. Bobby Kennedy, for another quite different example, was 38. We wanted him to tell his brother, the president, to personally escort to school on that day or the day after a small black girl already scheduled to enter Deep South school. Well, the rain set still, watching all the while. she looked at

Bobby Kennedy, who perhaps for the first time looked at her.