

## Lessons 6 and 7:

### “On the Pulse of Morning”

Maya Angelou

A Rock, A River, A Tree Hosts to species long since departed, Marked the mastodon, The dinosaur, who left dried tokens Of their sojourn here On our planet floor, Any broad alarm of their hastening doom Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages.	5
But today, the Rock cries out to us, clearly, forcefully, Come, you may stand upon my Back and face your distant destiny, But seek no haven in my shadow. I will give you no hiding place down here.	10
You, created only a little lower than The angels, have crouched too long in The bruising darkness Have lain too long Face down in ignorance. Your mouths spilling words	15
Armed for slaughter. The Rock cries out to us today, you may stand upon me, But do not hide your face.	20
Across the wall of the world, A River sings a beautiful song. It says, Come, rest here by my side.	25
Each of you, a bordered country, Delicate and strangely made proud, Yet thrusting perpetually under siege. Your armed struggles for profit Have left collars of waste upon My shore, currents of debris upon my breast. Yet today I call you to my riverside, If you will study war no more. Come, Clad in peace, and I will sing the songs	30

The Creator gave to me when I and the Tree and the rock were one. Before cynicism was a bloody sear across your Brow and when you yet knew you still Knew nothing.	35
The River sang and sings on.	40
There is a true yearning to respond to The singing River and the wise Rock. So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew The African, the Native American, the Sioux, The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the Greek The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheik, The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher, The privileged, the homeless, the Teacher. They hear. They all hear The speaking of the Tree.	45         50
They hear the first and last of every Tree Speak to humankind today. Come to me, here beside the River. Plant yourself beside the River.	
Each of you, descendant of some passed On traveller, has been paid for. You, who gave me my first name, you, Pawnee, Apache, Seneca, you Cherokee Nation, who rested with me, then Forced on bloody feet, Left me to the employment of Other seekers—desperate for gain, Starving for gold.	55      60
You, the Turk, the Arab, the Swede, the German, the Eskimo, the Scot, You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, bought, Sold, stolen, arriving on the nightmare Praying for a dream. Here, root yourselves beside me. I am that Tree planted by the River, Which will not be moved.	   65
I, the Rock, I the River, I the Tree I am yours—your passages have been paid. Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need For this bright morning dawning for you. History, despite its wrenching pain Cannot be unlived, but if faced	70    75

With courage, need not be lived again.

Lift up your eyes upon  
This day breaking for you.  
Give birth again  
To the dream. 80

Women, children, men,  
Take it into the palms of your hands,  
Mold it into the shape of your most  
Private need. Sculpt it into  
The image of your most public self. 85

Lift up your hearts  
Each new hour holds new chances  
For a new beginning.  
Do not be wedded forever  
To fear, yoked eternally 90  
To brutishness.

The horizon leans forward,  
Offering you space to place new steps of change.  
Here, on the pulse of this fine day  
You may have the courage  
To look up and out and upon me, the 95  
Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.  
No less to Midas than the mendicant.  
No less to you now than the mastodon then.

Here, on the pulse of this new day  
You may have the grace to look up and out 100  
And into your sister's eyes, and into  
Your brother's face, your country  
And say simply

Very simply  
With hope— 105  
Good morning.