

Name _____

Date _____



Fannie Lou Hamer

Malcolm, Medgar, Dr. King,
But let's talk about the hope that female voices could bring.
Yeah, who fought for Black people's right to vote?
Fannie Lou Hamer did that, y'all,
So take note.

Let's take Black history,
Turn it to Black her-story.
And nobody is free
Until everybody's free.
Fannie Lou Hamer
Used her voice for you and me,
Went from poverty to powerfully
Spreading testimony.

Fannie Lou Hamer, born 1917,
To sharecropper parents in Mississippi.
Working in the fields at the age of six,
But by the age of 12 she decided to quit school
To work more and make it through.
Later on, she and her husband were sharecroppers too.
In 1962, she learned about SNCC.
They were working on voting rights, brick by brick.
Hamer went and listened at the meeting.
She understood, and she had a feeling.
She was gonna fight for her rights
And help others to see her insights.

She and 17 neighbors took a trip to Indianola
With hopes of becoming registered voters.
She and one friend were allowed to apply.
They had to take a literacy test. That wasn't right, 'cause
These tests were meant to block Blacks from voting.
They failed the test not even knowing
That on the way home the police would say
That their bus was too yellow, so they'd have to pay!
The passengers scraped up \$100,
While Hamer sang spirituals in defiance.
She was defiant, never compliant.
She was a giant.

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Hamer's actions caught SNCC's attention.
They thought she'd be a great leader with the rising tensions.
Fannie began working on desegregation,
Voter registration, aiding Mississippians.
Heading back from a conference in '63,
They sat at a lunch counter for "Whites-only."
She was arrested for this act of protest
And beaten in jail, physically affected for life.
But to her, it felt like a victory.
Yeah, it felt like a victory.

As a founding member of the MFDP,
She challenged the Mississippi Democratic Party
And ran for Congress in '64.
Lost by a landslide, but it was still a score.
She played a major role in the Freedom Summer,
Then aimed for DNC seats, bringing thunder.
She testified before the Credentials Committee
About her life, strife, and all the beatings.
President Johnson interfered with a press conference
To distract them from her views.
It backfired. Hamer was all over the news,
A national figure due to her true testimony.
She returned to Mississippi, putting on for the homies,
And this is what she taught me.

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I just ask the question: How?
What if it was us living that time now?
She saw the bodies hanging from the trees.
As the people cried tears, they fell to their knees.
She made it somehow. She had hope
All the people would rise from down under Jim Crow.
The '60s, a decade like no other,
Brought by Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights mother.

