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| A Brave and Startling Truth    **Maya Angelou American Poet, Author and Actress** |   |

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|  | We, this people, on a small and lonely planet Traveling through casual space Past aloof stars, across the way of indifferent suns To a destination where all signs tell us It is possible and imperative that we learn A brave and startling truth And when we come to it To the day of peacemaking When we release our fingers From fists of hostility And allow the pure air to cool our palms When we come to it When the curtain falls on the minstrel show of hate And faces sooted with scorn are scrubbed clean When battlefields and coliseum No longer rake our unique and particular sons and daughters Up with the bruised and bloody grass To lie in identical plots in foreign soil When the rapacious storming of the churches The screaming racket in the temples have ceased When the pennants are waving gaily When the banners of the world tremble Stoutly in the good, clean breeze When we come to it When we let the rifles fall from our shoulders And children dress their dolls in flags of truce When land mines of death have been removed And the aged can walk into evenings of peace When religious ritual is not perfumed By the incense of burning flesh And childhood dreams are not kicked awake By nightmares of abuse When we come to it Then we will confess that not the Pyramids With their stones set in mysterious perfection Nor the Gardens of Babylon Hanging as eternal beauty In our collective memory Not the Grand Canyon Kindled into delicious color By Western sunsets Nor the Danube, flowing its blue soul into Europe Not the sacred peak of Mount Fuji Stretching to the Rising Sun Neither Father Amazon nor Mother Mississippi who, without favor, Nurture all creatures in the depths and on the shores These are not the only wonders of the world When we come to it We, this people, on this minuscule and kithless globe Who reach daily for the bomb, the blade and the dagger Yet who petition in the dark for tokens of peace We, this people on this mote of matter In whose mouths abide cankerous words Which challenge our very existence Yet out of those same mouths Come songs of such exquisite sweetness That the heart falters in its labor And the body is quieted into awe We, this people, on this small and drifting planet Whose hands can strike with such abandon That in a twinkling, life is sapped from the living Yet those same hands can touch with such healing, irresistible tenderness That the haughty neck is happy to bow And the proud back is glad to bend Out of such chaos, of such contradiction We learn that we are neither devils nor divines When we come to it We, this people, on this wayward, floating body Created on this earth, of this earth Have the power to fashion for this earth A climate where every man and every woman Can live freely without sanctimonious piety Without crippling fear When we come to it We must confess that we are the possible We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world That is when, and only when We come to it. |  |  |  |

 | Aloof- far awayImperative- vital importanceMinstrel show- show endsSooted- dirtyColiseum- museumRapacious- greedyRacket- loud noisePennants- flagsGaily- HappyTruce- peaceRitual- ceremonyIncense - perfumeEternal- lasting foreverKindled- to lightSacred- holyMiniscule- smallKithless- not knowingTokens- symbolMote- tiny pieceCankerous- soreAbide- liveExquisite- specialSapped- suckedIrresistible- Justin TimberlakeHaughty- disproveContradiction- opposing statementsWayward- difficult to controlSanctimonious- being betterPiety- being religious |

**Directions:**

Part 1 write a one sentence summary for each stanza (you should have eleven total sentences). This should take you 20 minutes or more to do. This poem was specifically chosen for the complex imagery found in Maya Angelou’s writing.

Part 2 what do you think Maya Angelou was referring too in the last stanza by the word “it” and by the title “Brave and Startling Truth?” Draw on poster paper what this means to you. Include the last sentence summary on your poster.