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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 away  Imperative- vital importance  Minstrel show- show ends  Sooted- dirty  Coliseum- museum  Rapacious- greedy  Racket- loud noise  Pennants- flags  Gaily- Happy  Truce- peace  Ritual- ceremony  Incense - perfume  Eternal- lasting forever  Kindled- to light  Sacred- holy  Miniscule- small  Kithless- not knowing  Tokens- symbol  Mote- tiny piece  Cankerous- sore  Abide- live  Exquisite- special  Sapped- sucked  Irresistible- Justin Timberlake  Haughty- disprove  Contradiction- opposing statements  Wayward- difficult to control  Sanctimonious- being better  Piety- 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.