“The Last Revolutionary (For Abbie Hoffman)” by Amiri Baraka

The following is a transcript of Amari Baraka’s reading of “The Last Revolutionary (For Abbie Hoffman)” at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, October 8, 1980.

Transcript:

“The Last Revolutionary (For Abbie Hoffman)”

Yeh, he come out
yesterday. Give himself up
to the Feds. Alott lights
& cameras. All the newspapers
&I seen him
come in. Good news
for the tabloids. good news
for the professional
cooler outers. Good news
for the state. It's a
tv story, he came in
from the wars, from out
in the
hills,
He'd fought the good
fight, underground
so long, dodging a cocaine
bust in the name
of the people.
He's come out now
for forgiveness.
He'd come out w/ a changed
nose. Did he know now that
the whole of the Chicago 7
had come out? Even Bobby untagged
has shouted a defiant
cookbook. Inverts & buddists
& social democrats. It all goes along
so well. He had to
come out. Like the
Weather people.
When they found
the war
was over. Had to Had
to come out. Like Susan & Jane
& Dick & Spot. Had to come out
now the war's
over.
And he was smiling, so kind & expansive
in a moment of triumph. From north
in the bush, conquering the wild sea
he returns w/ media hype tickertape
& the slobberings of prostitute reporters.
Revolution for the hell
of it Steal this Book
Soon To Be A Major Motion Picture, come in
w/ him. The Yippies, in line all the time,
come in
w/ him. & Wall St. Jerry
& Movie Senator Tom
& Non-Violent Dave,
& 3 Card Molly Eldridge
Come in come in all
come in
w/ him

A black playwright we know says, "I ain't never been
ideological," another one screams, "Uphold the middle class" w/ his head inside
the ass
of a whore named Hollywood
& we laugh & we laugh & we laugh laugh
It's a funny time.

But is it not better
that all illusion suffers
that the clowns in our midst
be exposed. Dont say
I told you so, the hero reappears
released rightaway
on the news of the day. The tv tells us clearly
Come Out w/ Your Hands Up & all will be
forgiven. Naughty Children Naughty Children
Uncle Sam spank! Be thankful yr the wayward
child of imperialism.
He had to
do it He had
to

and you too, the monitor beams
give it up, Jimmy Carter'll give you
a job. You can get a picture on yr
wall grinning at his hand holding
yours. Selling papers
about his capers
the bourgeoisie thinks
we'll buy hero finks
but most of knew way back then
that Abby and his boys would soon get in the wind.
Not an, "I told you so,"
but a class analysis
and the last analysis
which is the one the workers will make
not jet set bohemian glamour,
or media shout outs fake militant clamour
will change things
but those of us, under the heel, missing a meal
whose pain is for real
& not honorary

because we cannot come out
there’s no way to go
no reward for surrender but
vicious unfilled stupid death.

There is no last
Revolutionary, state & media bastards
until the planet itself disappears
& who can speak on that?
The real fighters are still fighters!
The actual strugglers are actually struggling-
Let the bullshit rise be blown away
No television magic or all purpose gibberish
No Hollywood squares or militant roach advertisements
can change or estrange us from ourselves
or each other there are still and will be
till - revolutionaries in the landscape
in factories, community centers
workshops, and bowling alleys
in theaters, coal mines,
hospitals and tobacco fields
Real Revolutionaries
hidden among the
awakening mass
there is no last
revolutionary
till the planet itself
explodes . .

So, Long Live the death of bourgeoisie clowns!
Long live the death of any illusion that they
are revolutionaries! He had to come out
He had to. We know. & in the factories and
across the broad black belt and tierra de la raza
in the southwest. We let loose our joy cries and laughter

Goodbye, motherfucker, we call
Goodbye. Welcome to Disneyland
we say. And smiling, we know you never
really left!