

## We Gotta Learn

there's something unsettling  
about old houses in america

tall walls  
thin smiles  
dust settled deep in the window tiles

the kinda place with creaky floors  
old locked doors

where rich folks sip lemonade  
while history leak through the floorboards

tour guides talk soft  
like if they whisper the past  
it won't sound as awful

pointing at silverware behind glass  
like forks got cleaner stories than the hands they passed

i walked through one once

every room smelled like polished wood  
and secrets hidden too long where they stood

outside  
tourists laughing on the lawn  
inside  
i swear the air felt wrong

cause america got a habit  
of dressing wounds in gold fabric

throw a flag on pain  
call it passion

rename suffering  
and sell it back as tradition

but i'm staring at a staircase

thinking about footsteps

who walked up em  
who ran down em  
whose heartbeat got so loud  
they thought the whole house found em

cause freedom sound pretty  
till it's your life on the line

till cold hit your teeth  
and fear hit your spine

everybody wanna quote freedom  
like it came cheap

whole time freedom probably looked like  
dark water and blistered feet

probably smelled like harbor salt  
wet clothes

hands shaking from the cold

cause people love freedom in hindsight

after the risk done passed  
after pain gets cleaned up into classroom facts

but in the moment?

freedom probably felt terrifying

cause sometimes survival and imprisonment look just alike

sometimes the cage feed you  
sometimes it dress you nice

sometimes pain gets so familiar  
you stop asking why it stay every night

we gotta learn

this country was built by contradiction

folks chasing liberty  
while tightening somebody else's restrictions

that tension still live here

in classrooms  
courtrooms  
headlines and gossip

every time somebody say  
"that's just how america is"  
like struggle itself patriotic

i remember being young  
thinking america was simple

good guys  
bad guys

fireworks and bald eagles

real movie scene type stuff

then you grow up

realize the american dream got landlords  
late fees  
and police lights flashing through car doors

realize some people inherit safety  
others inherit survival stories

some people born with room to dream  
others spend they childhood trying not to become warnings

and despite all that

people still laughed  
still loved  
still made music loud enough  
to shake grief from they blood

that type of resilience different

Now that's what soul sounds like

that's somebody looking suffering dead in the face  
and refusing to let it swallow em whole

and maybe that's why i respect the runners

the ones who chose cold nights over owned lives  
who would rather risk death  
than never feel alive

cause i think alot of us still running today

from poverty  
from shame  
from systems that profit off pain

but maybe freedom start small

truth spoken out loud  
heads unbowed  
refusing to shrink just to fit in a crowd

maybe being american  
ain't pretending this place perfect

maybe it's loving people enough  
to say this way of life still hurting

to keep learning

keep building

keep breaking old cycles apart

cause a country ain't its buildings

And freedom comes from the damned ones heart