Heritage

we receive hand-me-downs well-worn

from our fathers, cloth bloodstained, crimson and

bruised blue and endless, flooding

white.

there are stories woven between frayed seams. There are lessons

spelled out in bullet holes. There are promises and pledges,

that this is a nation with *justice for all*,

there are scars in these stars

for each promise that lies

shattered in yellowed pages of history.

but we never allow there to be silence.

we promise ourselves, *forward*, and so

we receive hand-me-downs tattered and torn

from those who chose

to sit in the front of the bus,

cloth sagging, bursting with hopes and

*dreams* that they had. We could never hope

to fill these shoes but still

we sit,

and we step into them,

and we march. we run.

we promised ourselves, *forward,* and so

our descendants will receive hand-me-downs built and borne

out of callouses on our feet, of the sweat

that traces our brows, cloth threaded with light

that breaks over the summit

when we ascend the hill that we climb –

the light that we

promised that they would see.

the light that we

were brave enough to be.