

The Greatest Story Never Told

Stories from the Black experience to help you live your best life.



Hello Beloved,

Have you ever felt disillusioned?

If you have, it's understandable.

Many people of color have become disillusioned with the following declaration...

**We hold these truths to be self-evident,
That all men are created equal,
That they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights.
That, among these are Life, Liberty,
and the pursuit of Happiness.**

But what do you do when you learn that **"all that glitters isn't gold"**?

How does one handle disappointments like these?

In **Part 5** of **The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ**, we'll learn how a **mere teenager** came face to face with this profound question... and we'll see what he decided to do about it.

Taken to heart, his example can help us **find the courage** to be our true selves... and not phony gold.

If you've not read **Parts 1 through 4**... you'll want to do so before reading Part 5. You can get to them by clicking on the links below.

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 1](#)

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 2](#)

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 3](#)

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 4](#)

If you have read Parts 1 through 4... you're in business. Keep reading my friend.

All That Glitters Isn't Gold



Life's Hardest Punches

“ We stood there on the bridge, not saying a word.

Finally, Ronnie said... we'd better get the hell away from here.

He was **wiping his knife** on his sleeve like a violin bow.

My bike's wrecked, he said... surveying what was left of it.

It was a mass of **twisted metal**.

So, we tested my motorbike to see if it would carry us both.

But something **about my face** stopped Ronnie.

You hurt? Got damn... they got you, didn't they?

I shook my head.

Physically, I'd come out better than I expected.

But the **miserable pain** in my head and stomach that I'd felt in the restaurant, **had returned**.

Punches... like the blows exchanged with Frog's gang were bearable.

But I was feeling the after-effects of the blows from the **mayor** and **restaurant owner**.

The Thrill is Gone

Let's wash off this blood, Ronnie concluded. It'll make us feel better.

I followed him down to the river and hung the Olympic medal on a pier column.

The red, white, and blue ribbon was thick with Frog's blood. Some of it had even stained the gold.

Ronnie picked it up tenderly.

Even **before washing himself**, he washed the medal.

He rubbed the luster back into the gold, rinsed the blood off the ribbon... and **hung it lovingly** around his own neck.

I stopped and watched.

This was the **first time** the gold medal had been away from my chest since the Olympic judge hung it there on the day I stood on the podium.

And, for the first time... **I saw it as it was.**

Ordinary.

Just an object.

It had lost its magic.

Waking Up

Suddenly, I knew what I wanted to do with this **cheap piece of metal** and raggedy ribbon.

And, as soon as I knew... **the pain in my stomach eased.**

We quickly rinsed off and Ronnie put the medal back around my neck.

Then he followed me to the bridge to get the motorbike.

I remember thinking that the middle of the Ohio river was probably the **deepest part.**

So, I walked over to the center of the bridge.

Ronnie, with that **extra sense** people have when they've known and loved each other for a long time, **anticipated** my actions.

Dropping the motorbike, he ran toward me... yelling.

But I had already snatched the ribbon from around my neck.

I held the medallion out, so it wouldn't tangle in the bridge structure, and **threw it into the black water** of the Ohio river.

I watched the medal sink... dragging the red, white, and blue ribbon down to the bottom behind it.

A False Idol

When I turned around, Ronnie had a look of **horror** in his eyes.

Jesus!

Oh my God!

Tears began to flow down his cheeks.

Oh my God. Do you know what you just did?

Ronnie... it wasn't real gold, I said. It was phony!

I tried to put my arms around him. But he was wet, cold, and stiff.

It was phony, I repeated.

But he wasn't listening.

Why'd you throw it in the river?

Why?

How could I put the answer together?

I wasn't sure of all the reasons myself.

The Olympic medal had been the **most precious thing** that had ever come to me.

I worshipped it.

It was proof of performance.

It was a symbol of status.

It was a symbol of belonging... of being part of a team, a country, a world.

It was my way of redeeming myself with my teachers and schoolmates at Central High.

It was my way of letting them know that, although I had not won scholastic victories, there was something inside me capable of victory.

What I Really Needed

How could I explain that I wanted something **that meant more** than that?

Something that was as **proud of me** as I would be of it.

Something that would **let me be** what I knew **I had to be.**

My **own** kind of champion.

Sometimes Others Don't Understand

You **crazy fool**, Ronnie shouted.

He turned against me with a hostility he'd never shown before and grabbed the neck of my sweater in a fierce grip.

They going to let a **nut like you** be the champ?

What are the papers going to say?

Your sponsors are supposed to take pictures with you and the medal. What are you going to say to them?

I loosened his hands from my sweater and held his arms firmly.

We ain't going to say nothing. Nothing at all.

Healed

The medal was gone...

But the sickness and pain **was gone too.**

I felt calm, relaxed, confident.

My time as **The Great White Hope** was over.

I felt a new, secret strength.

The Future

I tried to console Ronnie.

Wait until we win the real Heavyweight Championship belt, I said.

It's real gold... with diamonds and rubies in it.

It's the same belt that was handed down by all the heavyweight champions... John Sullivan, Jack Johnson, Russ Willard, Jack Dempsey, Jack Sharkey, Max Baer and Joe Lewis.

It's a belt made for the great champions... not something made of phony gold.

I didn't know it then, but Ronnie **would never see** the gold, diamonds, and rubies in the Heavyweight Championship belt.

In the very near future, he would engage in yet another life-or-death battle.

And this time... he would die.



Let's put a bookmark here beloved... and pick back up on **the conclusion** to our story next week.

As a preview, there's an old poem that says...

**Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns.**

Next week, we'll see the champ go through one final twist and turn.

But this twist will change him for the **rest of his life...** and make him into the man he became.

So, join us next Sunday for **"I Too"...** or **Part 6** of **The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ.**

Are You a Sharer?

*It ain't no fun if the homies can't have none.
~ Snoop Dog*

If you are and **would like to share "The Poet, the Frog, and the People's Champ" with a friend,** you can by clicking on the link below and copying and pasting the URL.

[The Poet, the Frog, and the People's Champ](#)

Once again, thank you for taking this journey with your fellow readers.

It's just one lesson from the greatest story never told.

If you have a story of your own that you'd like to share, send it to me at the email address below. I'd love to hear it.

Or, if you have comments, expressions, or feedback... feel free to hit me up at b.johnson@ethnicexpressions.com

Until next time,

Brian

