

To Bring Justice Near -- a poem for Joseph McCoy

On the Commemoration of the Lynching of Joseph McCoy in Alexandria, Virginia, on April 23, 1897

A Black man was lynched in our city, *here*,
where a white mob savagely had its way.
We must face history, bring justice near.

He lived on Alfred Street, age eighteen years,
grew up when harsh Jim Crow laws ruled the day.
A Black man was lynched in our city, *here*.

Together let's say his name, bare our tears.
We lift up Joseph McCoy, and we pray:
We must face history, bring justice near.

The trauma from racial hate is severe,
remains till *now*, unless we change our ways.
A Black man was lynched in our city, *here*.

No one was tried for his murder; it's clear
that this son of our city was betrayed.
We must face history, bring justice near.

Let's educate our youth, open eyes, ears,
so inhumanity is *not* replayed.
A Black man was lynched in our city, *here*.
We must face history, bring justice near.

(c) Zeina Azzam, Poet Laureate of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, April 23, 2022