

## Freedom Sermon – Alabama, USA

*Ashley M. Jones*

*Poet Laureate of Alabama*

“Why do we want to kill all the broken people? What is wrong with us, that we think a thing like that can be right?”

–Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*

“You are a light. You are the light.”

–John Lewis, *Across That Bridge:*

*A Vision for Change and the Future of America*

The chickens knew. Their blood in the soil knew  
when it spilled, when it curdled in the pan  
that there was a movement brewing in you,  
John, they heard you speak God’s word—the right man  
for the job, by far. The chickens knew, yes,  
but so did the Bull, the hose, sweet Dixie  
and the US President, too. Oh, Bless.  
Blessèd freedom fighters who unfix the  
chains and prison bars—stripes rough and unjust  
on a flag sewn with blood. Bryan, when did  
you learn that dollars grease the system’s rust  
and fill the cells to bursting? God forbid  
the least of us unite. Now, we must fight—  
the thing you cannot bury is the light.

