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ODE TO (AND FROM) A SOLDIER OF JUSTICE
(Justin Dart: 1930-2002)

I cornered
Justin in a
Dallas
bathroom
in the mid-1980s
relaying
tales of
injustice in
Oklahoma's
"system" of
rehabilitation;
Justin responded
challenged
and changed the
injustice.
We met again
not so many
years down the
line, fighting for
justice for all.
Through the years
we'd say a quick
hello; more often
I'd receive a
thank-you or
Christmas
card, or other
token of
appreciation.
When Justin
passed to
a new world
a few
weeks ago
he left a
calling card, a
passionate
poetic
statement
of justice:

Dearly Beloved:

*Listen
to the*

heart of this
old soldier:
the time comes
when body and mind are
battered and weary.
I do not go quietly
into the night.
I do not give up
struggling to be a
responsible
contributor to the
sacred
continuum of
human life.
I do not give up
struggling to
overcome my weakness
conform my life
and that part
of my life
called
death to the
great
values of the
human dream.

Death is not a
tragedy. It is not an
evil from which
we must escape.
Death is as
natural as birth.
Like childbirth
death is often a
time of fear and
pain, of profound
beauty
celebration
mystery and majesty;
life pushing
horizons toward
oneness with the
truth of mother universe.
The days of dying
carry special
responsibility. To
communicate values
in a uniquely
powerful way,
the person who dies
demonstrating for
civil rights.

Let my final actions

thunder of
love
solidarity
protest
empowerment.

I adamantly protest the
richest culture in the
history of the
world, a culture
capable of
creating a
golden age of
science and democracy
dedicated to
maximizing the quality of
life of every person
squandering the majority of its
human and
physical capital on
modern versions of
primitive symbols of
power and prestige.

I adamantly
protest the
richest culture in the
history of the world
incarcerating millions
with and without
disabilities in barbaric
institutions, backrooms and
worse, windowless cells of
oppressive perceptions, for the
lack of the
most elementary
empowerment supports.

I call for
solidarity
among all who
love justice
love life
to create a
revolution
to empower
every single human
being to govern his or her
life, to govern
society
to be fully
productive of life
quality for
self and for

all.

I do so love all
patriots of
every nation
who fought and
sacrificed to
bring us to the
threshold of this beautiful
human dream. I do so
love America the
beautiful and our
wild, creative,
beautiful people.
I do so
love you
my beautiful
colleagues in the
disability and civil rights movement.

My relationship with
Yoshiko Dart includes
transcends
love.
She is my
wife
partner
mentor
leader
inspiration to
believe the human
dream can live.
She is the
greatest human
being I ever known.
Yoshiko
beloved colleagues
I am the luckiest
man in the world
to have been associated with you.
Thanks to you
I die free.
Thanks to you
I die in the
joy of struggle.
Thanks to you
I die in the beautiful
belief that the
revolution of empowerment
will go on.
I love you so much.
I'm with you always.
Lead on!
Lead on!

Thanks
Justin for
your
words
leadership
love.
While we
struggle toward
justice with
love
we'll recall
Justin
who combined
justice
with love
for all.

Steven E. Brown
July 22, 2002

Thanks to Yoshiko Dart for permission to use - poetically -
Justin's final *Manifesto*.