

The Sayings of Henry Stephens  
By Carl Sandburg (Springfield, Illinois, 1917)

If you get enough money  
you can buy anything  
except. . . you got to die.

I don't like meatheads  
shootin' off their mouths  
always wrasslin' 'n wranglin'.

The cost of things to live on  
has gone too high.

They ought to be brung down  
where they's more equal like  
with other things.

One summer  
potatoes was peddled  
around Springfield here  
for fifty cents a bushel;  
another summer  
I paid four dollars a bushel.

Tell me why this is.

We got to work to eat.

And the scripture says:

"Muzzle not the ox that  
treadeth out the com."

Human is human.

Human may be wrong

but it's human all the same.

There's time when a scab

ought to have his head knocked off

his shoulders.

But first we ought to talk to him

like a brother.

I pay a dollar a month to the coal miners' union

to help the street car strikers.

It costs me \$25 if they ketch me ridin' on a car.

That's all right.

Las' Monday night I busted somethin' in my left arm.

I walked, mind you, I walked a mile and a half down to the doctor's office.

It kep' on swellin' an' when I got home

my wife had to put salt and vinegar on

to get my sleeve loose.

They always did say

Springfield is a wickeder town for women

than Chicago.

I see 'em on the streets.

It always was .

an' I guess always will be.

Fifty per cent of the men that gets married

makes' a mistake. Why is that?

You're a white man

an' I'm a negro.

Your nationality don't make no difference.

If I kill you

Everybody says:

"Henry Stephens, a negro, killed a white man."

I got a little Indian blood in me

but that wouldn't count.

Springfield is Abraham Lincoln's town.

There's only eight mines out of twenty

In Sangamon county

Where the white miners

Let a negro work.

If I buy a house right next to the Peabody mine

That won't do no good.

Only white men digs coal there.

I got to walk a mile, two miles, further

Where the black man can dig coal.

The United Mine Workers

Is one of the best or-gan- IZ-a-tions there is.

United means union,

And union means united.

But they's mines runnin' twenty-five years  
And the white man never lets the negro in.  
I remember when we was tryin' to organize.  
We met in barns an' holes,  
We met in the jungles.  
I used to go to all the meetin's them days.  
Now we meet downtown in a hall.

Now we's recognized by everybody  
Fur one of the most powerful or-gan-IZ-a-tions  
in the United States.  
I don't go to meetin's nowadays  
But if they's a cause to strike for I'll strike.  
I'd live in the fields on hard com for a just cause.  
Yes, for a just cause I'd live in the fields  
On hard corn.

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