**A Prayer of Lament for White America**

**By Melissa Auten**

Loving God,   
For the original sin of racism and colonialism brought forth onto these shores by our white ancestors so long ago,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the terror of the middle passage,   
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the theft of indigenous lands,   
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the institution of slavery which flourished in this country for 245 years,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For post-Civil War reconstruction abandonment of promises of land and reparations,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the Trail of Tears,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the practices of share cropping, loitering laws, chain gangs and theft of labor,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For hundreds of years of lynching which were attended as entertainment events by our ancestors,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For Wounded Knee,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For Indian Schools and theft of children from their tribes,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For Japanese Americans unjustly imprisoned in American internment camps during WWII,  
We lament, we repent, Lord hear our prayer.

For Jim Crow laws, voter suppression, segregation, and separate but equal court decisions,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For practices such as red lining, destruction of black wealth (Tulsa Race Riots) and other policies that have denied economic prosperity to people of color,   
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the racist trope of “The Welfare Queen”   
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For harm done to black and brown bodies by forced medical experiments and blankets infected with smallpox,   
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the disproportionate drafting and deaths of people of color in the war against Vietnam while whites got deferments,   
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the horrors inflicted during the CRM: Bull Conner’s fire hoses and attack dogs,   
4 little girls in a Birmingham church basement, Mississippi Burning, and the assassination of so many CRM leaders,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the modern day sins of the crack epidemic introduced into communities of color, for then implementing policies such as “3 strikes and you’re out“, for the sin of mass incarceration and disproportionate death penalties awarded by juries,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For all the policies which have amounted to eco-terrorism in communities of color and against the lands of tribal peoples,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the deaths/murders of Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Botham Jean, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Kendra James, Alton Sterling, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and countless others,  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For all the ways we have failed to see our culpability in any of this, for ever uttering the excuse “I never owned any slaves” as a means of asserting our own righteousness, for our inability to understand generations of advantages that have given us privilege, for our unwillingness to speak out, for our willingness to excuse the racism of our elders and other family members as that’s “just the way they are”  
We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

Loving and Holy God- Breathe into us, your broken people, The Breath of Life, Your Holy Wind, The Fire of Pentecost that we might be forgiven; that we might become compassionate; that we might learn empathy; that we might defeat apathy. We know that without acknowledging and turning from these sins you cannot ever heal the brokenness in us or ultimately in this, our home.

Change our hearts, O God. Come Lord Jesus Come! Amen

~Melissa Auten