

Street Stripes

In New York a woman welcomes the world-
 Dressed in gray robes,
 She holds a lamp, a book, and below her feet,
 The words of Emma Lazarus- a Jewish poet like me.
 In St. Louis,
 On the shores of the Mississippi-
 Huck and Jim's river-
 Rises a simple staggering arc,
 That serves as portal to the Great Frontier.
 If you place your ear on the steel,
 And strike it with your fist,
 She will echo- yonder, yonder, yonder.
 Across the bay from where we live,
 Is the grand orange span-
 Cabled, connective, foggy pretty-
 It closes our magic circle,
 And glows for all who cross the Pacific.
 And what then for us,
 And this odd little rock we call home?
 What speaks for us,
 What slogan or symbol,
 Works on Webster, Grand, Park and Ratto?
 Neither span nor statue,
 But a **shield**-
 The fierce frame imagined by every kid,
 Who held a garbage can lid and a stick,
 In defense of the Kingdom.
 Our escutcheon has been softened, somewhat,
 By child stripes.
 They say to all, we are all,
 Colorful, equal, parallel,
 And tells the story of union and inclusion,
 Welcoming everyone into every school,
 And lots of shops,
 Across Alameda.
 Yet posters and buttons are not enough-
 Our time demands boldness,
 Courage, a flagrancy to battle the darkness,
 And so,
 With grinning seriousness,
 I challenge us to *not* paint the town red,
 But Rainbow our streets instead:

Island drive must needs be purple,

Or maybe even mauve,
To honor all the colors,
That grew out of the grove.
Shoreline runs along the water,
So of course the perfect hue,
Is the color of my late mom's eyes,
Friendly cornflower blue.
For **Otis** I say let's go green,
Splash the paint from curb to curb,
Then fingerpaint the driveways,
Draw some pictures,
Write mad words!
Make **Central** Ave. bright yellow,
Heck add some glitter too,
Hold nothing back you artists,
For this is your town too.
Let's orange **Lincoln**,
Top to bottom,
And if you're expecting a clever rhyme,
Hey, I'm new as Poet Laureate,
Check back later, give me time!
Buena Vista shall be dark red,
It's the color of our blood,
Which by the way's the exact same,
No matter your neighborhood.

And our motto,
Our new poem of Hope,
For those who crossed a bridge or tunneled here,
To settle in 94501 or 2?
The great grandchild of E Pluribus Unum,
Three words in defense of fear,
Our Golden Rule,
Everyone Belongs Here.
As Rabbi Kushner once said,
The great work begins,
So grab a brush and bucket,
Don your smock and broken shoes,
And meet me on the streets my friends,
I'll be the guy banging roller trays,
Dancing on the drop cloth,
Singing couplets into the island air.