

Prisoners of Hope

by Cornell West

5 We need a moral prophetic minority of all colors who muster the courage
to question the powers that be, the courage to be impatient with evil and
patient with people, and the courage to fight for social justice. In many
instances we will be stepping out on nothing, hoping to land on
something....This hope is not the same as optimism. Optimism adopts the
role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things
are going to get better. Yet we know that the evidence does not look
10 good....Only a new wave of vision, courage, and hope can keep us sane—
and preserve the decency and dignity requisite to revitalize our
organizational energy for the work to be done. To live is to wrestle with
despair yet never to allow despair to have the last word.