



**“Legitimate Doubts” – Sermon by Eric Liu
Civic Saturday – May 20, 2017
Central Library – Seattle, WA**

It’s so good to be with you all this morning at the Seattle Public Library.

This institution – the public library – represents everything that is vital in our democracy today, and everything that is under assault as well: fact, knowledge, curiosity, diversity, community, openness, stewardship. I was proud to serve for a decade as a trustee of this institution, and I would have served many years more if I hadn’t been term-limited. I love the Library, and I love the people who work here.

This building – designed by the daring Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, hated by many Seattleites during the public comment period, and then, upon opening, celebrated for its light-filled, democratic boldness – this building reminds us how fickle public feeling can be. It shows us too that a cathedral makes the people as much as people make the cathedral. This building, imperfect but ambitiously unconventional, makes us better.

Civic Saturday is, as we describe it, a civic analogue to church. We have sung together. We have reflected silently. We have heard civic scripture. Well, here’s another churchy component I’d like to add: confession.

Here you all have come, in search of meaning and purpose and some slender reeds of hope in a time when national politics obliterates and makes a mockery of all those things, and here I am, with the job of supplying such purpose or such hope.

Perhaps I will. But I want to confess to you first that I am full of doubts. That my faith in American civic religion is under stress. Maybe that’s not surprising, given a crisis in Washington approaching Watergate depths and a simultaneous depth of ignorance and amnesia and inattention among giant swaths of the American public.

Still, I am usually Mr. Glass Half Full. And I am here to tell you today that, number one, I am doubting whether this government – and I do not only mean the Trump Administration – is legitimate. Number two, I am doubting whether democracy is, on balance, a good thing. And finally I am doubting whether the Union is worth preserving.

I’d like to share my doubts on each of these three fronts, and see if we can come out the other side with something more than doubt. Let’s begin with legitimacy.

LEGITIMACY

I recently realized that Donald Trump and I have something in common: neither of us can escape this nagging feeling that his presidency is illegitimate.

He is unfit mentally. He dismissive of constitutional norms. He is in league with an American adversary to strengthen illiberal racist populists worldwide and to undermine the rule of law at home. He does not even remotely understand the rule of law. He wants people to take an oath to him and not to the Constitution.

And that's just from *yesterday's* Twitter feed.

His insecurity about being a popular vote loser stuck at 38 percent approval, the fact of Russian manipulation in the election and his possible knowledge of collusion with to Russia, compounded by his profound inability to regulate himself – all this makes Trump compulsively claim *as fact* what he knows is *in doubt*: that he's legit. It makes him lash out at anyone who could challenge him, from a free press to an independent FBI. He's a Pinocchio POTUS who wants to be a *real* boy and a *real* president.

But wishing doesn't make it so. Or let me amend that: *His* wishing it doesn't make it so. *Our* wishing it could. More on that in a moment.

Let's look first at what legitimacy means. Legitimacy is the widespread belief that institutions of power are just, both in their origins and operations, and should thus be respected. In the case of a president, it's the belief that he should be accepted and followed as the rightful holder of power.

But let's take that a layer deeper. How widespread must that belief be? How informed or active a belief? How much respect should such belief demand? How much is enough, and measured how?

One core theory is that legitimacy derives from consent of the people. As Madison wrote in *Federalist 49*, "the people are the only legitimate fountain of power." That is true when the alternative is, say, a king or emperor or self-proclaimed descendant of God. But taken on its own terms, "the people" is a problematic idea and always has been.

For most of this country's history most of its people had no opportunity to express consent. Today, when the Supreme Court and their *confederates* in Congress and the states gut the Voting Rights Act, making it harder for poor people and people of color to vote, how can we talk in earnest about the will of "the people"? And let's be honest: even absent active voter suppression, only three-fifths of our electorate bothers to vote in presidential elections, and far smaller percentages in every other election.

So is ignorance assent? Is apathy acceptance? Is a long habit of acquiescence enough to make our leaders legitimate?

Legitimacy has something to do with popularity and something to do with justice but it's not the same as either. Even at the depths of his unpopularity, Jimmy Carter was never seen as an illegitimate president. Richard Nixon became illegitimate well before he resigned in disgrace. And Jim Crow was plenty popular in the South and seen by the majority there as legitimate even if it was morally repugnant and unjust.

Well, then what about procedural legitimacy, the requirement that following legal procedures makes an institution or leader legitimate? By that standard, Trump's Electoral College win was legitimate. So was Hitler's rise to the Chancellorship in Germany. By that standard too, the United States Constitution is foundationally *illegitimate*, since it was created by a group of delegates told by the people they represented to shore up the Articles of Confederation, not replace them outright.

To borrow the title of a fascinating book by the historian Michael Klarman: The Constitution was the product of "a Framers' coup."

Most of us, of course, feel it is far too late to challenge the legitimacy of the Constitution itself. Heck, most of us rapidly acquiesced to the 2000 Bush-Gore presidential election, which some had described as a coup by the Supreme Court. Why? Because most of us feel it is better to pretend that the system is legitimate than to face the alternative of anarchy. Self-government in a democracy has always required a suspension of disbelief about public consent, a faith in the magic of unspoken trust to keep the system running.

But then Donald Trump came along. From the time he was a candidate, Trump ripped away the façade and gave us cause to wonder whether we should suspend disbelief any longer. By his ingrained instinct for disruption, by his attacks on the weakened and corrupted institutions of our democracy, and by his own reckless and feckless form of occupying the presidency these last 121 days, Trump has revealed the rot, and he has accelerated it. Those are separate things, and we shouldn't conflate them.

So let's thank him – and then contain him. Thank him for being the virus that got the immune system of the body politic to kick in. It took a made-for-TV, money-grubbing, self-dealing fraudster who thrives on inequality to prove that American democracy is now a made-for-TV, money-grubbing, self-dealing fraud-fest that thrives on inequality.

But after we thank Trump for making us face facts about how sick American politics is, for forcing us to admit how unworthy of trust our political institutions have become, we must contain him. As relentlessly as the U.S. contained Soviet communism during the Cold War. Because his brand of truth-warping illiberalism, ever anxious to justify itself and now weaponized by the state, poses a potentially fatal threat to freedom.

When South Carolina senator John C. Calhoun didn't like the drift of federal tariff laws in the 1840s, he proclaimed a right of "nullification" – the idea that states could nullify any federal law they didn't like. The U.S. Supreme Court repeatedly struck down the idea but the stance of nullification had staying power in the form of states' rights, all through the years before the Civil War and through the years of the Civil Rights movement. Calhoun became a disunionist secessionist. But he and his kind had to yield, just as George Wallace and his kind did a century later, not because their claims were overruled by a court but because the United States used force to compel them to yield.

Push came to shove, bloodily.

Trump is a modern-day Calhoun but what he threatens to nullify is not just particular laws or statutes or treaties; he threatens, in his rhetoric and actions, to nullify the rule of law itself. The more he tries to delegitimize the FBI, the federal courts, the free press, the more he awakens America out of acquiescence. This is the origin of his illegitimacy. It is why he faces resistance at a scale that feels to his fragile ego like a witch hunt.

But consider this: Donald Trump could make himself more legitimate *today* if he started behaving like a grown man in control of his faculties who was respectful of the law and of the two-thirds of Americans who disapprove of him. He could. He could get a majority to root for him. Odds are, he won't. But the fact that he *could* tells us this: Donald Trump is not illegitimate because he is unpopular. He is unpopular because he is illegitimate.

Understandably, many people are unnerved by such talk. Indeed, some have suggested to me that the logical consequence of any questioning of a president's legitimacy must necessarily be armed rebellion against the government.

But that's simply wrong. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not accept or respect the legitimacy of the governments of the former Confederate states. But he preached and practiced nonviolent resistance against their illegitimate systems of oppression. As did Gandhi, who had even less reason to accept the legitimacy of the British colonial government and even more numbers on his side had he wanted to foment armed rebellion.

There are nonviolent ways to challenge, hobble, change, or topple an administration that most people deem less than legitimate: protest, civil disobedience, organizing, and, of course, elections. Those, by the way, are the same tools for healing a democratic system that has been rigged by the privileged to reward the privileged.

In short, the alternative to blind acceptance of a leader's claim to legitimacy is not violent chaos; it is everyday politics. It is democratic argument.

But this then brings me to the second source of my doubts: democracy.

DEMOCRACY

About seven or eight years ago, a friend told Jená and me that we had to watch a movie called *Idiocracy*. Many of you have seen it. It's about someone who gets transported from our time to an America 500 years from now when the society has become so lowest-common-denominator, so commercialized and entertainment-saturated, so obsessed with immediate gratification – in short, so democratic – that the public consists of lobotomized, manipulable fools who live among mounds of trash and broken cities while voting for idiots and watching a TV show called *Ow, My Balls*.

We hated it. It was so over-the-top and heavy-handed, so blunt in its satire and such a demonstration of the very thing it meant to satirize, that we could hardly finish it. Of course, this film today is understood as prophecy, a vision of the present. Mike Judge, the man who made the film and who's also the creator of *Beavis and Butthead* and more recently the much more subtle but equally biting satire *Silicon Valley*, has been quoted saying he could not have foreseen how quickly the nation's public life, online and off, would resemble *Idiocracy*.

I think that's overstated – but not by much. What concerns me today is not that so many people are civically uneducated and illiterate in power. What concerns me is that so many of those same people don't think they are. Tom Nichols, author of the new book *The Death of Expertise*, has put it well. We have a culture today that doesn't just tolerate ignorance; it glorifies it. Nichols describes a Washington Post poll after the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Most Americans could not locate Ukraine on a map. No surprise. But what was surprising is that the more inaccurately people guessed Ukraine's location, the more certain they were that the U.S. should intervene militarily.

To be expert is suspect because experts are elites, and elites are presumptively bad because elites are always looking down on non-elites. This was the view of many Trump voters. It was the view of Trump himself as he staffed his administration. But it's a view that precedes this president and is in evidence at the local level everywhere in the country. And of course, it expresses the essence of Jeffersonian equality and hypocrisy: no one's better than anyone else, so don't act like it if you are.

I know I keep coming back to the *Federalist Papers* but we live in times that underscore why Madison and Hamilton were always wary of both Jefferson and democracy. We live in times when Donald Trump can say he is the most persecuted politician in history, and while a thin layer of educated folks like us crack up and share memes mocking him, tens of millions of Americans who look to his Twitter feed as not just news but as truth believe him. And tens of millions more have no basis from which to question him.

With a democracy, as with almost any complex system, inputs are amplified as outputs. In that sense, our national government is highly representative. It's reflective of a populace that doesn't know history, doesn't know science, doesn't know ethics, doesn't

know art, doesn't know math, and doesn't know civics. And doesn't know it doesn't know. The result is so-called leaders and citizens alike who do not know their own minds, who are fed thought patterns and talking points and rhetorical postures and who believe that participation means just regurgitating those patterns, points, and postures.

What I am saying is I have been doubting whether democracy works at this scale. Whether the people of the United States are capable of self-government.

One of the projects I've launched recently out of the Aspen Institute is called the Better Arguments Project. It's based on the premise that there are deep philosophical divides that define American civic life – between a Hamilton and a Jefferson view of the role of government, between equality and liberty, between Pluribus and Unum – and that what we need today is not fewer political arguments but *less stupid ones*. We're designing a framework for the six core American arguments, these enduring tensions, populated with history and science and ethics and art and math and civics. And we are building public events and educational partnerships to spread this idea of "better arguments."

The truth is, as we've been developing this project I have sometimes feared that it is too late. It seems a flimsy wall against a great wave of idiocracy. And I'm doing this from the Aspen Institute, for Pete's sake, a bastion of elitism if ever there was one. But I'll tell you what has pulled me out of doubt and back into belief. *Doing the work*. And remembering that while a democracy governs by majority rule, it is moved by minority will. In every instance of significant civic change, it is the *majority* that bends to a *minority*.

I've been on the road for many weeks on book tour, and I've met so many people who embody the best Whitemanesque possibilities of our country: a teenage activist from the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico who's activating pottery makers and other artists to demand respect and a voice in local government; an intergenerational, interracial group of DC residents meeting in the basement of a Jewish Community Center to learn from the ACLU how to make sure city government protects refugees and immigrants; three eager Millennials who are leading Appalshop, an historic center in Kentucky that uses filmmaking and media to unleash untapped creativity in these ravaged Appalachian communities; ex-gangbangers in Chicago who are organizing youth in the Back of the Yards to engage in city politics; sixtysomething activists in San Francisco's Chinatown who are mobilizing to preserve the clout of that community; Glenn Beck followers in Dallas who are committing, thanks in part to the example he and I have tried to set on air together, to rehumanizing politics one relationship at a time.

All the jeremiads about idiocracy and the dumbed-down American people are accurate about the current state and dangers of public ignorance. But what they don't take into account is that things change. They change when people are invited to *be* the change. I'm reminded of a passage in Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station*, a sprawling intellectual history of the idea of revolution, from the storming of the Bastille in 1789 to Lenin's arrival at the Finland Station in St. Petersburg in 1917. Wilson describes how

Karl Marx, who had been raised in authoritarian Prussia and who'd never really been among the workers he championed, based his catastrophic prophecy of a war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie on a false assumption.

"The Armageddon that Karl Marx tended to expect," he wrote, "presupposed a situation in which the employer and the employee were unable to make any contact whatever. The former would not only be unable to sit down at the same table with the latter on the occasion of an industrial dispute; he would be inhibited from socking him in the jaw until the class lines had been definitely drawn and the proletarian army fully regimented.

"In other words," Wilson concluded, "Marx was incapable of imagining democracy at all."

What Wilson meant was that Marx was unable to imagine a contest for relative advantage among competing interests unfolding within a structure of laws and tribunals and elections and popular mobilizations that could change the game, the story, and the equation of power. He was unable to envision workers not as inert vessels for dialectical materialism, but as living citizens, exercising and demanding and wielding power.

Marx was unable to imagine democracy because he was blinded by his fixed and ultimately dehumanizing notion of what the proletariat was. Whenever I get down on my ignorant fellow Americans, I realize I too am sometimes unable to imagine democracy. I too can be blinded by a fixed dogmatic image of people in all their inglorious idiocy.

My condescension in those moments isn't worth a damn. The only thing that *is* is my willingness to grapple with the complexity of what I think is other people's simplicity. To see, as Mary Cadette did, what Sonia Sotomayor *was* and could be. Not what she'd read. What matters is my commitment to joining the work of facing ourselves and our deficits and giving others the space to do the same so that *from there, from that basis of equal humanity*, we can learn what we need to learn to argue better and to build better.

It only takes some of us, not all of us. We, who are more than a few, less than the many, and truly committed to living like citizens and not like idiots.

But it's hard. It's tempting just to retreat to like minds, and to minds of like levels or styles of cultivation. And it's not just me. Increasingly, so many of us are beginning in the age of Trump to indulge fantasies of secession, of self-segregation into safe and welcoming bubbles. Which brings me to the final object of my doubts: the Union itself.

UNION

Last month I saw the West Coast premiere of an imaginative satirical play called *Wellesley Girl*. Ben Phillips from Citizen University and Shaudi Vahdat, who led us in song earlier today, were part of the company that produced and performed the play. It is

set in the year 2465 – around the time of *Idiocracy*, incidentally – and an environmental catastrophe has reduced the entire United States to four towns in the Boston suburbs, outside of which the water is undrinkable and it is assumed there is no life.

There are several hundred survivors, and so each one is a member of Congress. The one surviving lawyer is the Supreme Court. There are humanoid robots among them but they don't vote. And the people are all at odds with each other because they have been contacted by someone on the outside – friend or foe, they do not know – and they can't decide whether to preemptively attack the outsiders or to welcome them.

One of the almost thrilling things about this ingenious play by Brendan Pelsue is that it forces us to imagine if we were each colonists in a small experimental society where every action and omission had life-and-death consequences. Even in what seems to be a homogenous setting, there is so much cause for discord and difference in aspiration, that the tiny nation – such as it is – can barely hold itself together.

That play reminds us again of the fiction of legitimacy and the imaginary nature of any nation. These people are acting out of a habit of obeying the Constitution and following parliamentary procedure, and it's funny and touching and pitiful all at once that they pretend to sustain the idea of the United States. Of the Union.

Anyone who has heard any of my prior Civic Saturday sermons knows that I worship at the altar of Lincoln. I believe deeply in the Union. And so when I tell you now that I have begun to doubt that faith, I hope you'll recognize how serious this is for me.

Why have I begun to doubt? Well, for one thing, post-election you can't get into a conversation among other progressives without someone making a sort-of joke about how the West Coast should secede or how Washington should merge with British Columbia and become Cascadia or how blue cities should band together in an archipelago of progressivism and form their own federation separate from the rest of the country. I have hated such talk. I have never joined in. But it's everywhere.

I'm also influenced by the articles and polls showing that Trump voters, by and large, are just digging in despite the evidence of catastrophe and that the more he screws up or screws them over, the more they defend him – indeed, perversely, the more they seem to identify with him. When I see that, I sometimes have a deep visceral reaction: let them go, these fools who feel far more foreign to me than many foreigners.

And when I observe the bottomless cynicism of Congressional Republican leaders who are so committed to cutting taxes on the wealthy and deregulating the economy that they are willing to tolerate every single one of Donald Trump's threats to the republic, I must admit I sometimes think we still have a Confederacy. It's no longer all south of the Mason-Dixon line. It's in the Rust Belt and New England mill towns. It's in the Mountain West and inland California. It's in the United States Capitol. It exists wherever people

are committed to a Confederate notion that capitalism is about reducing labor costs to as close to zero as possible, that white supremacy is a fine basis for a nation, that government is only an oppressor and never a liberator.

When I see these neo-Confederates I again think: *let them go*. Let them make their own nation and see how long they last. Let them try to play at independence and let them see how truly dependent they are, how deeply dysfunctional, how backward and lost they are without the Union.

And then I catch myself and I realize I am one million miles away from the man I worship. I am one million miles away from the self-control, the compassion, the capacity for forgiveness, the supple and profound humanity of Abraham Lincoln. I am one million miles away from the rigorous idea that Lincoln held of why the Union mattered.

Lincoln was not a fetishist. He didn't like the Union as a totem or a religious object. He believed in Union because he knew, as did the Framers of the Constitution before him, that disunion meant death for everyone. He believed in Union because he knew that the Civil War was not only a territorial conflict; it was, perhaps first and foremost, a conflict within each person's soul. He knew it was no more possible to cut off the South from the North than it is for a human to cut off hate from love, selfishness from altruism – that if we have honesty and *integrity* we know each of us is all these things.

And when I catch myself like that, I see articles like the one in today's New York Times about the removal of Confederate monuments, including a statue of Robert E. Lee, from the center of New Orleans. I read the words of Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who said, "To literally put the Confederacy on a pedestal in our most prominent places of honor is an inaccurate recitation of our past, it is an affront to our present, and it is a bad prescription for our future." And the article closes quoting an advocate for removal, a 43-year old contractor who said as the Lee statue was taken down, "It happened just like that." That contractor's name, amazingly, is John Calhoun.

Of course, it didn't happen "just like that." It took 133 years. Disunion, like reunion, unfolds slowly. But the cascading effects of both can feel immediate.

Let's imagine that the West Coast secedes from red America. How soon before Bakersfield, California and Wenatchee, Washington and Pendleton, Oregon start saying, "We're not part of the Left Coast. We want out." Imagine that Seattle secedes from the rest of Washington. What then? It will be just like *Wellesley Girl*. The differences *within* will be inescapable. Richer neighborhoods will want to secede from poorer ones. Denser younger neighborhoods will want to secede from stodgier leafy ones. What then? Madrona east of 34th will want to secede from Madrona west of 34th. North Capitol Hill from South Capitol Hill. Madison Park from Madison Valley. What then? People who own their homes will want to secede from people who rent. And so on and so on.

There is no end to the impulse for disunion. We can slice things in half infinitely, until we get to the living human heart. Then we will realize there is no achieving the dreams of purity and homogeneity that drive secession. The lesson of the entire American experiment is that it is far better to struggle with the difficulties and dissatisfactions of Union than to chase the illusory and unattainable safety of secession.

We live in a time of creeping disunion, and it remains possible that we will just fall apart rather than choose to come apart. But that possibility is what makes me shake off the blankets of doubt. That possibility – that our generation might, by simple neglect and fatigue, just let the United States come undone – is enough to get me to stand up.

RESOLUTION

And so this is my resolution: both in the sense of what I am *resolved* to do, and how I mean to *resolve* my doubts about the legitimacy of our democracy and our Union.

I hereby resolve to imagine my country and to do everything in my power to create it.

Among my teachers in this work are eighty high school students I met two weeks ago. They were mainly students of color from tough backgrounds in Boston area schools, and all of them were participants in a program called Facing History and Ourselves. They, more than most, have reason to be cynical about the American idea and the American Dream. They, more than most, have cause to doubt the American promise. And they, more than most, have decided just to live it and challenge it and change it.

One student, a strong-voiced young black woman from Tech Boston Academy, asked me how young people like her could claim their power in civic life. Then she told me about how in her history class, after reading Howard Zinn, she had to write an alternative history of her neighborhood and city, a history from the street level that includes all the people and lives and unsung stories and dissenting views that are usually excised from “legit” history.

I paused. I looked at her. And I told her she had just answered her own question. She is writing a new America, no less than Terry Tempest Williams did with *Testimony*. She is writing herself into the story. She *is* the story: of renewal, eyes wide open; of one nation, as indivisible as hope is from hurt and doubt from faith.

So are we all. And this is our time.

Readings to Precede the Sermon May 20

Justice Sonia Sotomayor **From *My Beloved World* (2013)**

Until I arrived at Princeton, I had no idea how circumscribed my life had been, confined to a community that was essentially a village in the shadow of a great metropolis with so much to offer, of which I'd tasted almost nothing. I was enough of a realist not to fret about having missed summer camp, or travel abroad or a casual familiarity with the language of wealth. I honestly felt no envy or resentment, only astonishment at how much of a world there was out there and how much of it others already knew. The agenda for self-cultivation that had been set for my classmates by their teachers and parents was something I'd have to develop for myself. And meanwhile, there could come at any moment the chagrin of discovering something else I was supposed to know. Once, I was trying to explain to my friend and later roommate Mary Cadette how out of place I sometimes felt at Princeton.

"It must be like Alice in Wonderland," she said sympathetically.

"Alice who?"

She was kind enough to salvage the moment with a quick grace: "It's a wonderful book, Sonia, you must read it!" In fact, she would guide me thoughtfully toward a long list of classics she had read while I'd been perusing *Reader's Digest*. What did my mother know of *Huckleberry Finn* or *Pride and Prejudice*?

President Abraham Lincoln **From his First Inaugural Address** **March 4, 1861**

In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail *you*. You can have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect and defend" it.

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Terry Tempest Williams
From *When Women Were Birds* (2012)

We wrote an impassioned letter to our friends. It began: “We need your help.” The letter went on to say, “Utah’s redrock wilderness is in jeopardy. Here’s the political situation we are up against.... We know you love Utah’s wildlands. We are asking you to please write the most eloquent, beautiful essay or poem you have ever written. We cannot pay you, and we need your essay in three weeks.” We mailed the letter to twenty-five western writers, each one with firsthand knowledge of America’s redrock wilderness.

Miraculously, in three weeks we had twenty original pieces from a community of writers committed to language and landscape, essays as heartfelt as anything we had ever read.... We had to work quickly. We knew the biographies were important to show the standing of the writers involved. We wanted signatures from each of the writers to add solidarity and depth.... We included a map, with a list of all the proposed wilderness areas within the Citizens’ Proposal for America’s Red Rock Wilderness. In two weeks we had our book. We called this anthology *Testimony: Writers of the West Speak on Behalf of Utah Wilderness*.

Good work is a stay against despair.

Copies of *Testimony* were, in fact, passed throughout Congress.... Six months later, on September 18, 1996, President William Jefferson Clinton designated the new Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, protecting nearly two million acres of wilderness in Utah.... Afterward, President Clinton held up a copy of *Testimony* and said, “This little book made a difference.”

One never knows the tangible effects of literature, but on that particular day, looking north into the vast wildlands of the Colorado Plateau, one could believe in the collective power of a chorus of voices.

While Love is Unfashionable

Title and Lyrics: Alice Walker

Bridge Lyrics: Walt Whitman

Music: Shaudi Bianca Vahdat

Let us be poor (let us be poor)
In all but truth (in all but truth)
Courage handed down (courage handed down)
From old spirits (from old spirits)
While love is dang'rous (while love is dang'rous)
Let us gather blossoms (let us gather blossoms)
Under fire (under fire)
Under fire (under fire)

I hear America singing
I hear America singing
The varied carols I hear
The varied carols I hear
I hear America singing

Stand By Me

By Ben E. King, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller

When the night has come
And the land is dark
And the moon is the only light we'll see
No, I won't be afraid
Oh, I won't be afraid
Just as long as you stand
Stand by me

So darlin', darlin'
Stand by me, oh, won't you stand by me
Oh, stand, stand by me
Stand by me

If the sky that we look upon
Should tumble and fall
Or the mountains should crumble to the
sea
I won't cry, I won't cry
No, I won't shed a tear
Just as long as you stand
Stand by me

And darlin', darlin'
Stand by me, oh, stand by me
Oh, stand now, stand by me
Stand by me

Whenever you're in trouble, won't you
stand by me?
Oh, stand by me
Won't you stand now?
Oh, stand, stand by me