

Praise Song for the Day, Elizabeth Alexander

Each day we go about our business,
walking past each other, catching each other's
eyes or not, about to speak or speaking.

All about us is noise. All about us is
noise and bramble, thorn and din, each
one of our ancestors on our tongues.

Someone is stitching up a hem, darning
a hole in a uniform, patching a tire,
repairing the things in need of repair.

Someone is trying to make music somewhere,
with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum,
with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.

A woman and her son wait for the bus.
A farmer considers the changing sky.
A teacher says, *Take out your pencils. Begin.*

We encounter each other in words, words
spiny or smooth, whispered or declaimed,
words to consider, reconsider.

We cross dirt roads and highways that mark
the will of some one and then others, who
said
I need to see what's on the other side.

I know there's something better down the
road.
We need to find a place where we are safe.
We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.
Sing the names of the dead who brought us
here,
who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges,
picked the cotton and the lettuce, built
brick by brick the glittering edifices
they would then keep clean and work inside
of.

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the
day.
Praise song for every hand-lettered sign,
the figuring-it-out at kitchen tables.

Some live by love thy neighbor as thyself,
others by first do no harm or take no more
than you need. What if the mightiest word is
love?

Love beyond marital, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,

praise song for walking forward in that light.

We All Are One in Mission

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Rusty Edwards, 1986; alt.

Memmingen ms., 17th century
Harm. George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1904

1. We all are one in mis - sion, We all are one in call,
2. We all are called for ser - vice To wit - ness in God's name;
3. Now let us be u - nit - ed And let our song be heard.

Our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed By Christ, the Lord of all.
Our min - is - tries are dif - ferent, Our pur - pose is the same:
Now let us be a ves - sel For God's re - deem - ing word.

A sin - gle, great com - mis - sion Com - pels us from a - bove
To touch the lives of oth - ers By God's sur - pris - ing grace
We all are one in mis - sion, We all are one in call,

To plan and work to - geth - er That all may know Christ's love.
So ev - ery folk and na - tion May feel God's warm em - brace.
Our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed By Christ, the Lord of all.