



The following is an excerpt from Elizabeth Alexander's poem,
"Praise Song for the Day"

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

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.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
anything can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,
praise song for walking forward in that Light.

And So It Is.

