



THE CENTRE
OF DEMOCRACY

Poet in Residence

David Chapple

November 2017 to April 2018

Poet in Residence

The Centre of Democracy was opened in May 2017 through a partnership led by the History Trust of South Australia with the State Library of South Australia. Its remit is to share the story of democracy in South Australia. We do this through a permanent exhibition in the Institute Building on North Terrace's cultural precinct, as well as activities, programs, events, and online engagement.

The Centre aims to allow for multiple voices to be heard and shared in a variety of ways. This is how we came to appoint a Poet in Residence.

David Chapple, the Poet in Residence, had a goal to use the concept of democracy as inspiration for creating poetry and verse with a number of groups in South Australia. This involved drawing on participants' understanding of democracy, what is presented in the Centre's permanent exhibition, and an exploration of the work of well-known poets. Workshops happened in community centres and hubs, business rooms, meeting places, and at the Centre of Democracy's exhibition space.

The selection of poems featured in this booklet are the result of group-writing led by David.

The Centre of Democracy and David Chapple would like to thank the following groups for participating in the project.

Common Ground

Identity Rites

Southern Youth Rainbow Space

Socialist Alternative

Society of English Teachers

Please enjoy the work created, and think about how you express your voice in our democracy.

Democracy

By Common Ground

Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness
And what do we need?
To conform to the voice of the hand that feeds

I am me

Immersed, and outside a community
But eager to change the world. I am
Distilled down
A dot on a landscape of events
I am the quietest voice, almost meditative
Alone, and critical of everything I do
Then told I have equal value
And I have to feel I have equal value.
I can be a mythical force
Loving, kind, sure, unsure
Vast, complex, sure, unsure

We collectively make this world

I will say

Live in your own way
Not too rigid, not too bound
Say your truth
Not too loud

Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness
Just a grand way to state
We must participate.

Democracy

By Identity Rites

Today is all we have
And to launch our peace testimony
A studied tradition that embraces all
No need to hold your breath or fall
Jarred knees on hardwood floor
Very few dogmas to ignore
Faith disillusioned, disowned
Divorced from divinity, truth told
Free from a system that dwarves
We have the strong, silent community
We have motivation and connection to truth
Perspective must come with a burden of proof
Peace
The building block for this esteemed body
Love
The best of all bad systems.

Home

By Southern Youth Rainbow Space

Is sometimes fear
How do I describe the sounds I hear?
I can't recall
The screech of wheels, or what was worse
The ugly burn-outs at the church
It's all arguments, past arguments, bitter-sweet memories
 Being lost in the trees
 The trickle of the stream
 The sound of the sea
Growing up inland, shotgun in hand
Mum's muffled footsteps on the cork
Home was never a physical building
It was just a vague feeling
It was calmness constructed
Rain and earth
Fresh and clean
Jasmine so strong it made me dizzy
Like the squeal of my first pride parade
Comfortable, warm, open, safe
The warmth of Dad's jacket
The soft song of mother
A place to invite friends over.

Democracy

By Socialist Alternative

Revolution is an inevitable state

A tinder box and spark

A fate

Because freedom is a mirage

A barrage

Of half-truths

Hidden controls

That feed

The institutional denial of human need

Homelessness, controls, wage slavery

The myth of capitalism and democracy

No politicians speak of my dreams

I take to the street

To voice my needs

To fight, by whatever means

Social justice

Just us with a revolutionary idea

A narrative of liberty

The death of tyranny

Nothing for you to fear

Change your consciousness

Evolve, invest, not in stocks and bonds

Unity will make us strong.

In the Classroom

By Society of English Teachers

I'm teaching 1984 again
I'd like to change things
Reduce conformity
And the lack of perspective it brings
In my limited choice
I choose
To give people voice
This may be hypocrisy
In this unwieldy democracy
But I believe we should feel free
I believe it's my job to influence
My privilege
To point out the slim pickings of representation
The narrowing of voice in this nation
It's time to point out
It's time to shout
About change
Although
There will still be curbs on my freedom
Perhaps rightly so.



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