

Epistolary to 'The Great American Song'

hear me out: what if
it *is* turtles all the way
down, but shell to shell
claw to claw, ad infinitum?

what if fireworks represent
the angst we never intend
to have again, that we have
again because we're all still.

if men were angels
there would be no need.
we would dance on pin-
heads in our tap shoes

laughing at the garmentmaker
swatting his ear in pauses
between stitch and stitch.

tinnitus and taxes, utopian
dreams: there will always be
the people. america, the great

experiment where that variable

holds, you and me, whoever

we choose to prove to one

another we are capable of being.

what if this is what you shall do:

today we swear to us sitting.

“Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body. “