

JAMES BENTON

Address Alternate Gettysburg Lincoln's of Reading¹

Full text re-conceived

(a a a a a a)

above add advanced. ago all
altogether and

(and and and and)

any are are
are as battlefield be be before birth
brave brought but But, by can

(can can can can)

cause civil come conceived
conceived consecrate, consecrated continent
created dead dead
dead, dedicate
dedicate,
dedicated
dedicated
dedicated
dedicated,

detract. devotion
devotion—did
died do earth.
endure. engaged equal. far
far fathers field, final
fitting for

(for for for for)

forget forth fought
Four freedom—and from
from full gave
gave God, government great great
great ground. hallow have

(have have have have)

here here
(here here here here, here, here).
highly honored in increased is

¹ If reading this aloud, do not articulate the words in parentheses. If reading silently, do not think them.

(in in in)

(is is It it It It)

it, larger last liberty, little live.

lives living living, long

long measure men,

men met might nation

(nation nation, nation),

nation, never new new nobly

nor not

(not not not not)

note, Now *(of of of of of)* on

(on or or our)

our people, people

people, perish place poor

portion power proper proposition rather

rather, remaining remember resolve resting

say score sense, seven shall

(shall shall)

should so so

so struggled take task

testing that

*(that that that that that that that that that the The The the
the the the the the the the their these these they they they
this this this this).*

those thus *(to to to to to to to to)*

under unfinished us us

us—that vain—that war,

war. we We

(We we we we we we we we) what

what whether which which who who

who will work

world

years

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“Address Alternate Gettysburg Lincoln’s of Reading” was created from Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (1863). About the poem and the process of composing it, James Benton writes:

To create this poem, I alphabetized Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, then arranged the results in rough lines, looking to tease out alternative readings based on the aleatory associations of words thus rearranged. Some words, such as articles and other small words, tended to repeat without adding much substance, so without removing them altogether, I set them aside as supernumerary. I wanted to preserve the integrity of the text and its internal potential by not adding text of my own, which would tend to direct the reader to my own reading rather than allowing the resulting text to speak for itself.

James Benton is the author of *Sailor* (Winter Goose Publishing 2017) and *The Book of Sympathetic Magic* (Winter Goose Publishing 2021). His work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Tahoma Literary Review*, *Clade Song*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Poetry Now*, and elsewhere. James lives in La Grande, Oregon, and is a member of the Blue Mountain Writers group.

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