



Out of My Depth

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Stronger Than Death



by [Gregory Golley](#) June 15, 2025

There are dreams stronger than death.

Men and women die holding these dreams.

--- Carl Sandburg, *The People, Yes*

The people, yes. Hell yes.

On Saturday Americans took to the streets across the nation to protest and resist what they recognize as an aspiring authoritarian ruler occupying the White House. They came out in massive numbers – from Idaho to Pennsylvania, Indiana to California – to exercise their right to protest and resist.

In the weeks leading up to the demonstrations that went under the heading “No Kings Day,” Americans have seen their public officials arrested or threatened with arrest; they’ve seen law-abiding immigrants rounded up in indiscriminate I.C.E. raids; they’ve seen the president needlessly federalize the National Guard in California against the wishes of the governor of that state; they’ve seen the U.S. marines deployed to intimidate protestors in Los Angeles; they’ve seen a U.S. senator wrestled to the ground and handcuffed for asking a question at a press conference; they’ve heard the president of the United States say that the governor of California should be arrested for the “crime” of running for governor; they’ve heard the speaker of the House recommend that the governor be “tarred and feathered” (stripped naked and covered in burning hot tar) for disagreeing with the president. And they’ve watched years of violent rhetoric turn finally to violent acts. On the very morning of the “No Kings Day” protests, Americans learned of two prominent Minnesotan politicians shot in their homes along with their spouses. Two of the four victims have died.

Observers have called this one of the most shameful and darkest moments in American history. I agree. For the presidency and for congress, this *is* a shameful moment. It *is* dark. History will look back in horror at the behavior of many of those occupying positions of power within those institutions. But for the country as a whole, which is made up of people, after all – people of many backgrounds and opinions, opinions which often clash (let us not deceive ourselves) – this may well yet prove to be our finest hour.

For what I witnessed on Saturday, both on the streets of Chicago and in reports from across America, was the foreshadowing of a brave and joyous future. A new kind of political movement is taking shape, a movement of first principles. In essence, strange to say, it's a *conservative* movement: a movement that seeks to honor and preserve, to hold sacred not any person, but an idea (of all things!), an idea that stands above any individual. An idea that our own mothers and fathers and grandparents (not so long ago) suffered and fought and died for.

The contrast between Trump's military parade and the "No Kings Day" events was so stark as to hardly bear mentioning. It was like a TV dinner placed next to a great and communally-prepared feast. A promise of destruction next to a prayer for justice.

The founders who drew up the blue-print of our democracy saw the legislature as the centerpiece of American government. And yet, for much of my adult life, Congress has been floundering in its duty to legislate and in its role of serving as a check on the executive branch. Anyone in a position of power would do well to take heed of yesterday's events on the streets of America. Let Saturday's protests – peaceful, joyous, and galvanized everywhere by righteous anger – be a warning to those legislators who fear only the wrath of their party or their president. Senators

and Congresspeople, your loyalty is misplaced. Your calculations are in vain. The power is the people. Turn your eyes and ears to us.

What I glimpsed on the streets yesterday as I watched my two teenage kids shouting and proudly holding their signs of protest amounted to a new kind of strength, a power different from anything history has yet known. What I *felt*, however, was as old as our species. To express it, I will turn, once more, to that strange and mop-headed immigrant poet, Carl Sandburg:

*“I love you,”
said a great mother:
“I love you for what you are
knowing so well what you are.
And I love you more yet, child,
deeper yet than ever, child,
for what you are going to be,
knowing so well you are going far,
knowing your great works are ahead,
ahead and beyond,
yonder and far over yet.*

Yonder and far over yet.

Happy Father’s Day, America.

