

# Answering the call of the drums

**A GroupSpeak Assembled by Alice Lovelace**  
From the words of those in attendance at  
Animating Democracy, October 9-12, 2003, Flint, Michigan

Answering the call of the drums

We came

In single file, in duo

To feast on words and rhythms

With food in mouth and words in hand

We began our dance

Talk of past influences

Haymarket, Chicago, Labor History

Hull House to Alliance for Cultural Democracy

Led us to this time this place

Gathering to Animate Democracy

Facilitate dialogue

The papers say we can expect

Sunshine and a full moon on Friday

Welcome to Flint

A city bearing the brunt of change and art

Surviving

Through story, from story, to story

We were, we are, we will be

Fragments and weavers

The culture of questions

And it started with my ancestors and the men who tried to control them

And it started with flowers and bread set out for the poor

A rose painted under the sink

And it started with being sent to camps in Wyoming and California

Trying to make sense of the situation

Found objects, shells, home made dyes

To make flowers and jewelry

Beauty in the face of an unjust internment

Heads, hands and hearts together

Making art

Poetry and production

80 miles of lilacs

Conflict and freedom

The spirit of Chiapas

Urban agriculture all over Prince George's County

Restore the picture--a 2 1/2-mile vision of Detroit

Our job is to reconnect people to the cures of their ancestors  
There are things we know yet we violate our own truths for expediency  
Everything is time, death and land  
With each story, we get an inch closer  
We arrive at this point  
There are many more collective things that we know that we don't act on

It is not about the idea of art making  
But life making  
An incredible gift to be among so many people  
Moments of uncertainty—yet you still work through it in some way  
Knowledge from reality, despair and hope  
Capture the sense of experience and genius  
A lotus bringing light and beauty

Love and care for the people of the world  
Seek solutions to the growing disparity  
Identify with the sufferers  
Embrace and practice free will  
Life itself is a process of unending choices  
What are we talking about that will be different?

Expand the intellect  
Increase the courage  
Think anew  
What we do has to arrive organically  
Think genuine

There are some big decisions to be made  
Capture and own the mind  
You have to do it--surrender your wealth to strengthen your hope  
Get real with each other

There is a feeling of home  
If you are in a place, where you feel not wanted,  
Come home

Develop the youth  
Pioneer primary voices  
Engage the community  
Let them drive the work  
Look to see what is already going on

Make the critical shift  
Attend to the knowledge cause that is your power  
Share, infuse, observe, engage

There are different kinds of powers  
Speak what you believe in

You can't just imagine your future—you have to live it

Be rigorous

Prioritize

Make it work

Break through

Collaborate

Mentor

Help increase the peace

Answer the call to action

Slowly but surely, influence the process in collation with youth

It's about finding ways to connect energy—get people in the room

Speak the truth to power

What does it mean to have a democracy?

What are the actions that animate democracy?

We will not build tomorrow on a five-point action plan

Say what you believe your action should be

Speak with many voices

Run through a football field with a bowl filled with fish dodging tacklers

Address the lack of internal peace

Be a part of life in a different way

The answer begins with "I"

Let that bubble and work for a while

Then get to "We"

Shout out your appreciation

Get the important issues on the floor

Be bold

Be concerned about the moment we are in

Make it happen

Integrate it in your work

Go beyond it

Let collaboration drive it

How will you spend your time on earth in the most ethical way everyday?

Grow the people to do the work

Both elements together---activist and artist

I've been worrying about the sustainability of it

Hanging on by faith

Walk your talk for the common good

It is important for us to win victories to be encouraged to move forward

As we move towards organizing, the greatest challenge

To clarify what we want to do

Focus on the right questions---not the right answers

Process the information

If you change then the world will change

Art is a full-length mirror

Agitate

Move it forward

Find ways to sing and dance in every setting, for everybody

Move beyond protest to resistance

Change someone's perspective about an individual or a group of individuals

Acknowledge the positive things people have created for themselves

Use art to make a circle complete

Go to those places that need healing

Your freedom is being held hostage to our material well-being

Fighting over boundaries that shouldn't even exist

Return the world to its ecological basis

Take less and give more

How do we animate democracy?

Schools are a crucial place to start

Turn the democracy of everyday circumstances into a democratic society

Let's put the neighbor back in the hood

Develop a code of ethics

Come back down to earth

Chose your path to know where to go in the future

Have faith in the power of art and artist

Listen to the young people

Engage in a conversation with those who believe in conquest and conflict

Cause everyone of us can be better than we are

This is our moment

What are we leaving behind?

Find ways to open your institution, your life, to open the circle

Find the courage to know its okay

Question authority

There are cells that reach across wounds to connect and heal

Model the process of growth and learning

If you change then the world will change

If you change then the world will change

Educate

Agitate and

Organize

Organize

Organize