

Mount Rushmore

[1] I. George Washington

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We'll fear them not; we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.

(*Chester*, Revolutionary War Anthem by William Billings, 1770)

I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with my fathers.

(Letter from George Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette, February 1, 1784)

[2] II. Thomas Jefferson

Ogni dolce Aura che spira
par che dica ecco il mio ben
l'alma in sen d'amor sospira
qua l'attendo e mai non vien

Translation:
Each sweet breeze that blows
Seems to say, "Behold my beloved."
The soul in the breast of love sighs.
Here I await but my love never comes...

(*Ogni Dolce Aura*; song composed by Maria Cosway for Thomas Jefferson, December 24, 1786, Paris, France)

my Head
my Heart

(Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, 1786, Paris, France)

Music is the passion of my soul

(Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Giovanni Fabbroni, June 8, 1778)

Declaration
Tyranny
Liberty
Slavery
Necessity
Justice
Declaration of Independence

(Declaration of Independence; Thomas Jefferson, July 4, 1776)

[3] III. Theodore Roosevelt

There is delight in the hardy life of the open.
Forest and rivers
Mountains and plains
There is delight in the hardy life of the open.

There are no words that can tell
the hidden spirit of the wilderness,
that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its charm.

Leave it as it is.
The ages at work

There is delight in the hardy life of the open.
Wonderful grandeur
Majestic beauty
Natural wonder
There is delight in the hardy life of the open.

Keep it for your children.
Leave it as it is.

(Speech at the Grand Canyon, May 6, 1903; African Game Trails; Theodore Roosevelt, 1910)

Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

(*Rock of Ages*, hymn by Augustus Montague Toplady, words, and Thomas Hastings, music, 1763)

[4] IV. Abraham Lincoln

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government: of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

(Gettysburg Address; Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863)