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## Umoja: Each One of Us Counts

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## Umoja: Each One of Us Counts

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Rita Dove

One went the way of water,  
one crumpled under stone;  
one climbed the air but plunged through fire,  
one fought the fear along.

*Remember us, though we are gone.*

A star flares on an epaulet,  
a ball rolls in harm's way;  
the glowing line onscreen goes flat,  
an anonymous bullet strays—

*Remember us! Do not forget!*

One lay slathered in garlands,  
one left only a smear;  
one cracked a joke, smiled, then shrugged  
to show he didn't care.

*Do not forget that we were here.*

Do those who failed still miss the wind,  
that sweet breath from the sky?  
Do they still covet rock and moss  
or the swift, hard blink of the lizard's eye?

*We walk on water, we are written on air.*

Let us honor the lost, the snatched, the  
relinquished,  
those vanquished by glory, muted by shame.  
Stand up in the silence they've left and listen:  
those absent ones, unknown and unnamed—

*remember!*

*their* whispers fill the arena.

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MILITARIZATION