By Carl Sandburg

Lincoln?
He was a mystery in smoke and flags
Saying yes to the smoke, yes to the flags,
Yes to the paradoxes of democracy,
Yes to the hopes of government
Of the people by the people for the people,
No to debauchery of the public mind,
No to personal malice nursed and fed,
Yes to the Constitution when a help,
No to the Constitution when a hindrance
Yes to man as a struggler amid illusions,
Each man fated to answer for himself:
Which of the faiths and illusions of mankind
Must I choose for my own sustaining light
To bring me beyond the present wilderness?

Lincoln? Was he a poet?
And did he write verses?
“I have not willingly planted a thorn
in any man’s bosom.”
I shall do nothing through malice: what
I deal with is too vast for malice.”

Death was in the air.
So was birth.

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Source: The People, Yes (Harcourt Inc., 1936)