



# American Epic: Reading the U.S. Constitution

*Garrett Epps*

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In 1987, E.L. Doctorow celebrated the Constitution's bicentennial by reading it. "It is five thousand words long but reads like fifty thousand," he said. Distinguished legal scholar Garrett Epps--himself an award-winning novelist--disagrees. It's about 7,500 words. And Doctorow "missed a good deal of high rhetoric, many literary tropes, and even a trace of, if not wit, at least irony," he writes. Americans may venerate the Constitution, "but all too seldom is it read."

In *American Epic*, Epps takes us through a complete reading of the Constitution--even the "boring" parts--to achieve an appreciation of its power and a holistic understanding of what it says. In this book he seeks not to provide a definitive interpretation, but to listen to the language and ponder its meaning. He draws on four modes of reading: scriptural, legal, lyric, and epic. The Constitution's first three words, for example, sound spiritual--but Epps finds them to be more aspirational than prayer-like. "Prayers are addressed to someone . . . either an earthly king or a divine lord, and great care is taken to name the addressee. . . . This does the reverse. The speaker is 'the people,' the words addressed to the world at large." He turns the Second Amendment into a poem to illuminate its ambiguity. He notices oddities and omissions. The Constitution lays out rules for presidential appointment of officers, for example, but not removal. Should the Senate approve each firing? Can it withdraw its "advice and consent" and force a resignation? And he challenges himself, as seen in his surprising discussion of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in light of Article 4, which orders states to give "full faith and credit" to the acts of other states.

Wry, original, and surprising, *American Epic* is a scholarly and literary tour de force.

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In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, magazine, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for your requirements is American Epic: Reading the U.S. Constitution this reserve consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The words styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some analysis when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book suited all of you.

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