

Constitution: Ben Franklin

June

God is listening, gentlemen, so be careful with his name.
A bit more reverence, please, when you speak of his weather.
I know it's hot. Don't you think I'm still alive enough to feel it?
We are here,
if you recall,
to try to build a nation.
What's that, Rhode Island? No, '76 was not enough,
though if you care to abstain no one will probably notice.
What we accomplished twelve years ago was a war.
Yes, Virginia, I know it was necessary.
But a divorce does not a new marriage make.
We are Americans, but most of this country can't see that yet.
So we are here.
And though we may argue and bicker,
there had better be something feasible come out of this.
History,
as well as many a frightened, rebellious, would-be democracy,
is taking note of what we do here.
So bicker all you like, gentlemen,
but get something done.

July

Now, Carolina, you speak of the common man
so disparagingly. I wouldn't,
were I you.
Have you ever actually met one? I didn't think so.
Just remember, and this goes as well for you,
New York, that the common man's blood
soaked the virgin soil of this land.
They, not you with your money and false aristocracy,
died for the freedom we all enjoy.
Besides,
they outnumber you greatly.
It really is their nation,
and I'm pretty sure they did not ask you to run it.

August

I can see that we are at an impasse.
To have a strong government or many small ones—
that is, as I percieve it, the question.
I have no perfect answer—don't look so shocked,
Georgia—but I know enough to see that any
nation which cannot even tax its citizens for the common good
will soon be destroyed.
Remember how small and weak we are,
and how very close England and France are—God bless their war!
We must be strong!
We must also be just.
The man who solves that dilemma should be sainted.

September

Gentlemen, it is late,
and I am more tired of your shouting than I am of life,
and I've put up with life far longer.
How I wish Tom Jefferson were here!
Still, what we have come up with must do.
I admit I do not like all of it—yes, New York,
I know you don't like *any* of it—
but I'm not sure that I shall not like it better at a later point.
I believe this document, indeed, this nation as a whole,
God inspired and, somehow, God guided.
He does work in mysterious ways does he not?
And I have learned that questioning the divine will of the Lord
is ridiculous as well as dangerous.
I, gentlemen, shall sign.

—Jani Sue Muhlestein