

Medicinals

PJ Harvey

I was walking through the National Mall
Thinking about medicinals, how they used to grow there

When the ground was a marshland
Undisturbed by human hands, and I heard their voices:

Sumac said "We're always here"
Witch Hazel - "We're always here"
Sassafras - "We're always here"
Bluestem grasses always here

I looked about, and what I see?
Medicinals grow around me, rising from the gravel
Sumac and the Witch Hazel
Come to soothe our primal sores, come to soothe our troubles

Sumac said "We're always here"
Witch Hazel - "We're always here"
Sassafras - "We're always here"
Bluestem grass is always here

But do you see that woman, sitting in the wheelchair?
With her Redskins cap on backwards
What's that she's singing?
As from inside a paper wrapper
She sips from a bottle
A new painkiller
For the native people