

# THE AMERICAN FLAG

~ Joseph Rodman Drake



When Freedom, from her mountain height  
Unfurled her standard to the air,  
She tore the azure robe of night,  
And set the stars of glory there.  
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes  
The milky baldrick of the skies,  
And striped its pure celestial white,  
With streakings of the morning light;  
Then from his mansion in the sun  
She called her eagle bearer down,  
And gave into his mighty hand,  
The symbol of her chosen land.

Majestic monarch of the cloud,  
Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,  
To hear the tempest trumpings loud  
And see the lightning lances driven,  
When strive the warriors of the storm,  
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven,  
Child of the sun! to thee 'tis given  
To guard the banner of the free,  
To hover in the sulphur smoke,  
To ward away the battle stroke,  
And bid its blendings shine afar,  
Like rainbows on the cloud of war,  
The harbingers of victory!

Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,  
The sign of hope and triumph high,  
When speaks the signal trumpet tone,  
And the long line comes gleaming on.  
Ere yet the life blood, warm and wet,  
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet,  
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn  
To where thy sky-born glories burn;  
And as his springing steps advance,  
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.  
And when the cannon mouthings loud  
Heave in wild wreaths the battle shroud,  
And gory sabers rise and fall  
Like shoots of flame on midnight's pa  
Then shall thy meteor glances glow,  
And cowering foes shall shrink beneath  
Each gallant arm that strikes below  
That lovely messenger of death.

Flag of the seas! on ocean wave  
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;  
When death, careering on the gale,  
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,  
And frightened waves rush wildly back  
Before the broadside's reeling rack,  
Each dying wanderer of the sea  
Shall look at once to heaven and thee,  
And smile to see thy splendors fly  
In triumph o'er his closing eye.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!  
By angel hands to valor given;  
The stars have lit the welkin dome,  
And all thy hues were born in heaven.  
Forever float that standard sheet!  
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,  
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,  
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

# AMERICA FOR ME

~ Henry van Dyke (1852 - 1933)



'Tis fine to see the Old World, and travel up and down  
Among the famous palaces and cities of renown,  
To admire the crumbly castles and the statues of the kings—  
But now I think I've had enough of antiquated things

So it's home again, and home again, America for me!  
My heart is turning home again, and there I long to be,  
In the land of youth and freedom beyond the ocean bars,  
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Oh, London is a man's town, there's power in the air;  
And Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in her hair;  
And it's sweet to dream in Venice, and it's great to study Rome,  
But when it comes to living, there is no place like home.

I like the German fir-woods, in green battalions drilled;  
I like the gardens of Versailles with flashing fountains filled;  
But, oh, to take your hand, my dear, and ramble for a day  
In the friendly western woodland where Nature has her way!

I know that Europe's wonderful, yet something seems to lack;  
The Past is too much with her, and the people looking back.  
But the glory of the Present is to make the Future free—  
We love our land for what she is and what she is to be.

Oh, it's home again, and home again, America for me!  
I want a ship that's westward bound to plough the rolling sea,  
To the blessed Land of Room Enough beyond the ocean bars,  
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.



## **THE CHALLENGE OF THE FLAG**

~ Dr. Frank C. Huston (1870 – 1959)

**Old Glory, when we look on you, as you are hanging there,  
We wonder, could there ever be a banner still more fair?  
No other such arrangement of our stripes and stars that gleam,  
Could ever be so beautiful, no holy, it would seem.**

**As if the God above us all, in looking down could see  
Just what our Nation needed most, and what it's Flag should be,  
And guided those who made it, so in every thought and way,  
To make you, Glorious Banner, just what you are today.**

**But far beyond the beauty rare — God only could create,  
We recognize in symbol, that which make our nation great;  
No god of Gold; no favored class; not selfishness, nor greed;  
But Righteousness and Brotherhood, this is our nation's creed.**

**Within that Flag, we see, today, embodiment of Grace;  
The better things of all mankind for all the human race.  
The Red, there, tells how bold was shed that freemen still be free,  
How heroes died to usher in these better things to be.**

**The White, there, tells that for this land no hero died in vain-  
That those who live will ever keep that Flag without a stain.  
The field of Blue, bedecked with stars-a bit of heaven's dome,  
Reflects the glory of our God, who gives us such a dome.**

**Could any banner ever float o'er nations half so blest?  
The friend of all the needy world, the hungry and oppressed.  
She brooks no fears; desires no foes; but, advocates the plan  
That those who live beneath her folds, should be AMERICAN.**

**No hyphenated loyalty can give her honors due,  
Allegiance, undivided, that make a man true blue;  
No man can serve two masters, why should one care to try,  
While living 'neath the grandest Flag that ever graced the sky.**

**Old Glory when we see you there, what challenges you bring  
To those who know you as you ARE, and now your praises sing;  
You challenge us to lives that tell in high and holy deeds,  
To lives of noble thoughts and acts-not merely mouthing creeds.**

**And, so, we pledge you here, today, the best that in us lies,  
That you may wave forevermore, the fairest Flag that flies.  
We love you, dear old Banner Bright; God help us each to see  
That YOU are but the symbol of what We, ALL, ought to be.**

# **FLAG OF THE FREE**

~Walter Taylor Field (1881 – 1963)

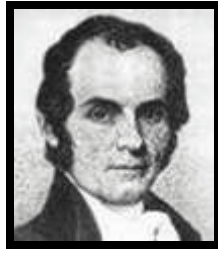
**Look at the flag as it floats on high,  
Streaming aloft in the clear, blue sky,  
Rippling, leaping, tugging away,  
Gay as the sunshine, bright as the day,  
Throbbing with life, where the world may see-  
Flag of our country, flag of the free!  
What do we see in the flag on high,  
That we bare our heads as it passes by,  
That we thrill with pride, our hearts beat fast,  
And we cheer and cheer as the flag goes past-  
The flag that waves for you and me-  
Flag of our country, flag of the free?  
We see in the flag a nation's might.  
The pledge of a safeguard day and night,  
Of a watchful eye and a powerful arm  
That guard the nation's homes from harm.  
Of a strong defense on land and sea-  
Flag of our country, flag of the free!  
We see in the flag a union grand,  
A brotherhood of heart and hand,  
A pledge of love and a stirring call  
To live our lives for the good of us all-  
Helpful and just and true to thee,  
Flag of our country, flag of the free!  
Flutter, dear flag, o'er the lands and seas!  
Fling out your stars and your stripes to the breeze,  
Righting all wrongs, dispelling all fear,  
Guarding the land that we cherish so dear,  
And the God of our fathers, abiding with thee,  
Will bless you and trust you, O flag of the free!**

# **FREEDOM ISN'T FREE ~ Anon.**

**I watched the flag pass by one day.  
It fluttered in the breeze  
A young Marine saluted it,  
and then he stood at ease.  
I looked at him in uniform  
So young, so tall, so proud  
With hair cut square and eyes alert  
He'd stand out in any crowd.  
I thought, how many men like him  
Had fallen through the years?  
How many died on foreign soil?  
How many mothers' tears?  
How many Pilots' planes shot down?  
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?  
No, Freedom is not free.  
I heard the sound of taps one night,  
When everything was still.  
I listened to the bugler play  
And felt a sudden chill.  
I wondered just how many times  
That taps had meant "Amen"  
When a flag had draped a coffin  
of a brother or a friend.  
I thought of all the children,  
Of the mothers and the wives,  
Of fathers, sons and husbands  
With interrupted lives.  
I thought about a graveyard  
at the bottom of the sea  
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.  
No, Freedom isn't free!!  
God Bless America!**

# BARBARA FRIETCHIE

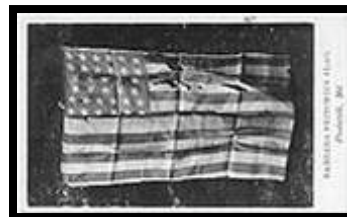
~ John Greenleaf  
Whittier (1809-1892)



Up from the meadows rich with corn,  
Clear in the cool September morn,  
The clustered spires of Frederick stand  
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.  
Round about them orchards sweep,  
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,  
Fair as the garden of the Lord  
to the eyes of the famished rebel horde,  
On that pleasant morn of the early fall  
When Lee marched over the mountain wall;  
Over the mountains winding down,  
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.  
Forty flags with their silver stars,  
Forty flags with their crimson bars,  
Flapped in the morning wind; the sun  
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.  
Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,  
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;  
Bravest of all in Frederick town,  
She took up the flag the men hauled down;  
In her attic window the staff she set,  
To show that one heart was loyal yet.  
Up the street came the rebel tread,  
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.  
Under his slouched hat left and right  
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.  
"Halt!" — the dust-brown ranks stood fast.  
"Fire!" — out blazed the rifle blast.  
It shivered the window, pane and sash;  
It rent the banner with seam and gash.  
Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff  
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.  
She leaned far out on the window-sill,  
And shook it forth with a royal will.  
"Shoot, if you must, this old grey head,  
But spare your country's flag," she said.  
A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,  
Over the face of the leader came;  
The nobler nature within him stirred  
To life at that woman's deed and word;  
"Who touches a hair of yon gray head  
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.  
All day long through Frederick street

Sounded the tread of marching feet:  
All day long that free flag tost  
Over the heads of the rebel host.  
Ever its torn folds rose and fell  
On the loyal winds that loved it well;  
And through the hill-gaps sunset light  
shone over it with a warm good-night.  
Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,  
and the rebel rides on his raids no more.  
Honor to her! and let a tear  
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.  
Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,  
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!  
Peace and order and beauty draw  
Round thy symbol of light and law;  
And ever the stars above look down  
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

Barbara Frietchie, also Fritchie, legendary American heroine, who reputedly at age 90 defied the Confederate troops under Stonewall Jackson as they advanced through Frederick, Md., by waving the Stars and Stripes from an upper window of her home. This story is the subject of the popular patriotic poem above, "Barbara Fritchie" (1864), by John Greenleaf Whittier, and a play, *Barbara Frietchie* (1899), by Clyde Fitch. Some historians believe the story of Barbara Frietchie to be fictional.



The first picture is of the flag owned by Barbara Frietchie; the next is her headstone; the third is of a memorial in her honor and the fourth picture is of the cemetery where Barbara Frietchie is buried.

# **BETSY'S BATTLE-FLAG**

~ Minna Irving (Mrs. Harry Michiner)

**From dusk till dawn the livelong night  
She kept the tallow dips alight,  
And fast her nimble fingers flew  
To sew the stars upon the blue.  
With weary eyes and aching head  
She stitched the stripes of white and red,  
And when the day came up the stair  
Complete across a carven chair  
Hung Betsy's battle-flag.**

**Like shadows in the evening gray  
The Continentals filed away,  
With broken boots and ragged coats,  
But hoarse defiance in their throats;  
They bore the marks of want and cold,  
And some were lame and some were old,  
And some with wounds untended bled,  
But floating bravely overhead  
Was Betsy's battle-flag.**

**When fell the battle's leaden rain,  
The soldier hushed his moans of pain  
And raised his dying head to see  
King George's troopers turn and flee.  
Their charging column reeled and broke,  
And vanished in the rolling smoke,  
Before the glory of the stars,  
The snowy stripes, and scarlet bars  
Of Betsy's battle-flag.**

**The simple stone of Betsy Ross  
Is covered now with mould and moss,  
But still her deathless banner flies,  
And keeps the color of the skies.  
A nation thrills, a nation bleeds,  
A nation follows where it leads,  
And every man is proud to yield  
His life upon a crimson field  
For Betsy's battle-flag!**



# **THE FLAG GOES BY**

~ Henry Holcomb Bennett

**Hats off!**

**Along the street there comes  
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,  
A flash of color beneath the sky:**

**Hats off!**

**The flag is passing by!  
Blue and crimson and white it shines,  
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.**

**Hats off!**

**The colors before us fly;  
But more than the flag is passing by.  
Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,  
Fought to make and to save the State:  
Weary marches and sinking ships;  
Cheers of victory on dying lips;  
Days of plenty and years of peace;  
March of a strong land's swift increase;  
Equal justice, right, and law,  
Stately honor and reverend awe;  
Sign of a nation, great and strong  
Toward her people from foreign wrong:  
Pride and glory and honor,--all  
Live in the colours to stand or fall.**

**Hats off!**

**Along the street there comes  
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;  
And loyal hearts are beating high:**

**Hats off!**

**The Flag is passing by!**

# THE FLAG ~ Arthur Macy (1842 - 1904)



Here comes The Flag! Hail it!

Who dares to drag; Or trail it?

Give it hurrahs,

Three for the stars,

Three for the bars.

Uncover your head to it!

The soldiers who tread to it,

Shout at the sight of it,

The justice and right of it,

The unsullied white of it,

The blue and the red of it,

And tyranny's dread of it!

Here comes The Flag! Cheer it!

Valley and crag; Shall hear it!

Fathers shall bless it,

Children caress it.

All shall maintain it,

No one shall stain it.

Cheers for the sailors that fought on the wave for it,  
Cheers for the soldiers that always were brave for it,  
Tears for the men that went down to the grave for it.

Here comes The Flag!

O flag of our Union,

To you we'll be true,

To your red and white stripes,

And your stars on the blue;

The emblem of freedom,

The symbol of right,

We children salute you,

O flag fair and bright!

# TOAST TO THE FLAG

~John Daly

Here's to the red of it -  
There's not a thread of it,  
No, nor a shred of it  
In all the spread of it  
From foot to head,  
But heroes bled for it,  
Faced steel and lead for it,  
Precious blood shed for it,  
Bathing it red!  
Here's to the white of it-  
Thrilled by the sight of it,  
Who knows the right of it  
But feels the might of it  
Through day and night?  
Womanhood's care for it  
Made manhood dare for it,  
Purity's prayer for it  
Keeps it so white!  
Here's to the blue of it -  
Beauteous view of it,  
Heavenly hue of it,  
Star-spangled dew of it  
Constant and true;  
Diadems gleam for it,  
States stand supreme for it,  
Liberty's beam for it  
Brightens the blue!!  
Here's to the whole of it -  
Stars, stripes and pole of it,  
Body and soul of it,  
O, and the roll of it,  
Sun shining through;  
Hearts in accord for it,  
Swear by the sword for it,  
Thanking the Lord for it,  
Red, White and Blue.  
Was changed by the Flag to a man!



**THE OLD FLAG** ~ H.C. Bunner  
Off with your hat as the flag goes by!  
And let the heart have it say;  
You're man enough for a tear in your eye  
That you will never wipe away.  
You're man enough for a thrill that goes  
To your very finger-tips--  
Ay! the lump just then in your throat that  
rose  
Spoke more than your parted lips.  
Lift up the boy on your shoulder high,  
And show him the faded shred;  
Those stripes would be red as the sunset  
sky  
If death could have dyed them red.  
Off with your hat as the flag goes by!  
Uncover the youngster's head;  
Teach him to hold it holy and high  
For the sake of its sacred dead.

**OUR NATIONAL BANNER**

**JULY 4, 1876**

~ Dexter Smith

O'er the high and o'er the lowly  
Floats that banner bright and holy  
In the rays of Freedom's sun,  
In the nation's heart embedded,  
O'er our Union newly wedded,  
One in all, and all in one.  
Let that banner wave forever,  
May its lustrous stars fade never,  
Till the stars shall pale on high;  
While there's right the wrong defeating,  
While there's hope in true hearts beating,  
Truth and freedom shall not die.  
As it floated long before us,  
Be it ever floating o'er us,  
O'er our land from shore to shore;  
There are freemen yet to wave it,  
Millions who would die to save it,  
Wave it, save it, evermore.

**YOUR FLAG AND MY FLAG**

~ Wilbur D. Nesbit

Your flag and my flag,  
And how it flies today  
In your land and my land  
And half a world away!  
Rose-red and blood-red  
The stripes forever gleam;  
Snow-white and soul-white -  
The good forefathers' dream;  
Sky-blue and true-blue,  
with stars to gleam aright -  
The gloried guidon\* of the day, a shelter  
through the night.

\* a flag resembling but smaller than a standard flag; a small flag or a streamer carried by mounted troops to indicate the side toward the guide when marching and to mark the line on which to make a formation. ~ Webster's Dictionary

**THE FLAG** ~ Anon.

Our Country's flag is beautiful.  
It's red and white and blue.  
Our flag belongs to all of us  
And not to just a few.  
Oh, look at our flag,  
How it stands tall and bright,  
How it moves in the wind,  
How it shines like a light.  
The colors are bright  
And the stars seem to shine.  
It's the flag of our Country.  
It's your flag and mine.

**O FLAG OF OUR UNION** ~ Anon.

A poem taught in American classrooms  
nearly a century ago  
O flag of our Union,  
To you we'll be true,  
To your red and white stripes,  
And your stars on the blue;  
The emblem of freedom,  
The symbol of right,  
We children salute you,  
O flag fair and bright!