

The Star Spangled Banner

O! say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes & bright stars thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming.
And the Rockets' red glare, the Bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our Flag was still there.
O! say does that star spangled Banner yet wave,
O'er the Land of the free, and the home of the brave.

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes.
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses;
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam.
In full glory reflected new shines in the stream.
'Tis the star spangled banner. O. long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion.
A home and a country, shall leave us no more

Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps pollution.

No refuge could save the hireling and slave,

From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave.

And the star spangled banner in triumph doth wave.

O'er the Land &c.

O! thus be it ever when free men shall stand

Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation.

Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land

Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just.

And this be our motto--"In God is our Trust";

And the star spangled banner, in triumph shall wave,

O'er the Land of the free and the home of the brave.

Song Story

Francis Scott Key wrote this glorious praise hymn that has become the national anthem for the USA. He was an American lawyer and poet. Key witnessed the British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore harbor in 1814. The victorious sight of the American flag still flying over the fort at daybreak inspired him to write the poem "The Star-Spangled Banner," which he set to the tune of an English drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven" by the Englishman John Stafford Smith.

First printed in a handbill and then in a Baltimore newspaper, it became a popular song. Then in 1931, following a twenty-year effort during which more than forty bills and joint resolutions were introduced in Congress, a law was finally signed proclaiming "The Star Spangled Banner" to be the national anthem of the United States.