

AN AMERICAN ANTHEM FOR OUR TIMES

*I say, did you see
On that September morn
When the planes turned to fire
And the towers were falling?*

*Yet united we stood
For all that was good
With the world on our side
Against wanton destroyers.*

*We wanted revenge
To avenge would be just
For thousands of lives
Lost in fire, smoke and dust.*

*But say, can you see,
When it's vengance we're seeking
Seeds of violence are sown,
War and death's what we're reaping?*

*And the leader we chose
Used the fear that we felt,
To make us less free
And to seek his own wealth.*

*It was justice we wanted
Not torture and shame;
Not the death of so many
Who were never to blame.*

*'Tis we here at home, not soldiers abroad,
Must stand up for peace, and liberty save.
Defeat tyrants at home, then we will remain
The land of the free, and the home of the brave.*

I do not claim to be a songwriter, since I am not a musician. Anyone who would like to try to improve on my words is free to do so, as the above is only a suggestion, inspired by the need for a national anthem that is relevant to our century.

The current anthem by Francis Scott Key was written during the war of 1812, one of the few times America has had to defend its own shores. Though it was reasonable to celebrate the non-loss of that war, I believe it is time to realize that the true greatness of America is not its ability to wage war, but the freedom of its people and their love of peace and justice.

Many Americans need to be reminded periodically that those who call for peace are just as patriotic, perhaps more so, as those who claim to support our troops in war. We need to remember that the danger to our freedom most often comes from within, from our elected officials, and we must watch them carefully.

It is the very essence of patriotism to care deeply what one's country does in the world; to work to make it a nation of which we can be rightfully proud.

Perhaps, then, we could sing an anthem that does not exult in causing the death of others, but urges us to ponder values and aspire to higher ideals.

I wrote this in September 2005, when Presidential lies had led to needless war. I was hoping that wouldn't happen again, but it has.

--cosmic rat