

We the People: An America 250 Collaborative Community Poem / We Hold These Truths

I don't see why you can't see

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,

a defiant Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty,

All men are created equal,

the Missouri Compromise—a free man if you lived far enough north,

Unalienable rights,

inherent and freely given to all.

It is the right of the people,

freedom earned, is freedom endured

That among these rights are life,

death, and a garden of nasturtiums.

Light has no color, and darkness has no color

just as goodness has no color,

and wickedness has no color.

There appears in humanity good as well as evil,

light as well as darkness in all creeds,

cultures, communities, countries, and nations!

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

the Federalist Papers—government justified

in eloquence and reason,

That all men are created equal,

and yet we have war!

The ties of our common kindred

are what makes us blended and splendid—

waging war against us only unites us.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

be it hereby stated that, all are equal beings

with the right to life for all colors, races,

sexual preferences and to agree to disagree

for the betterment of this,

our world, now and forever more.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

that all men, all women, and all genders are

created equally,

every child deserves to grow up feeling loved,

valued, and enough just as they are.

Mankind are more disposed to suffer,

while evils are sufferable.

It is our right to have our suffering seen.

It is our duty to see others' suffering.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—

May we build a world where kindness is

not rare, but something we choose every day.

Safety and happiness.

Even the smallest act of compassion can light

the heart of a hurting world.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

That we are absolved of all allegiances to new tyrants,

that it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government,

for America—we who stayed behind stand with

those who prayed each night and day for peace.

We join you who served and sacrificed

and are forever grateful.

Obstructing the laws of naturalization of foreigners

living in diaspora, my breath hugs the USA as home.

He has erected a multitude of new offices,

and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people,

and eat out their substance.

We invoke the memories of Renée Good and Alex Pretti

shot to death in Minneapolis, and also of

Keith Porter Jr. closer to home up in Northridge—

Their sacrifices will NOT be lost to history.

We might, therefore, acquiesce

but we won't, under tyranny.

The establishment of an absolute tyranny

is, at 250, as unwelcomed as it was at year zero:

A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act

which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

No further commentary needed.

Program Description:

In honor of the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the San Diego Public Library made an open request to the San Diego community to submit lines of verse in combination with lines quoted directly from the Declaration. In the resulting work, you'll find quotes from the Declaration *italicized* and the submitted verses in plain text. Some verses were altered as minimally as possible with punctuation or word additions/subtractions to fit the structure of the poem. We hope that all contributors feel their intentions and messages were honored with this small amount of editing. We did not edit for ideas or messages conveyed and attempted to accept as many valid entries as possible. The themes, ideas, and messages of individual verses represent those of the poets listed below, who all graciously chose to submit their own work, knowing it would be incorporated with the themes, ideas, and messages of other poets. While we must state that these views are not necessarily those of the San Diego Public Library, we thank these poets for taking creative risks and exploring these ideas together and apart, even when they may feel differently from one another. Happy 250th!

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