

## What Patriotism Means to Me

A land of countless stories and countless souls; countless people with countless goals.  
Across the seas that dance with foam is the blood of a soldier far from home. She protects those  
whom I love and those who love me, and the homes and lives of a people free.

Through right or wrong, in war or peace, our nation's stride will never cease. This land will  
always be ours to keep-I thank countless soldiers whose widows weep.

It's never easy, we're not always right, yet we stand strong through every night. We won't be  
divided by fights never done; *we'll always remember that we are one.*

We listen, learn, but we don't back down. We vow to always stand our ground. Though we  
may fight and make mistakes, our nation's people never break.

We all know perfect can't exist and yet through struggles we persist. I won't romanticize this  
land for which our people died. I won't say that roses sing in key; I won't say birds chirp from every  
tree. We do not live in a magic land. We live in one where hate still stands.

Nowhere is perfect-I will not lie-but I can say that our people try. We try to love (and we try  
to see) the beauty in our unity. We don't pretend that we can't bleed; we won't forget the history of  
blood and greed. But wars won't define us, nor will our past. Our *people* define us and their legacies  
last.

There are times we will fight and times filled with grief, but through it all stands one belief:

We are one people, big or small; we falter but will never fall. We live with joy, we live with  
pride, and a love for our country we'll never hide. We learn from some and teach to all that a nation  
is made by many cultures standing tall. Our soldiers protect us, their lives they gave, for this:

Our home of *all* the brave.