

## **“She, The Flag” by Sophia Miller – Awarded Judges Choice**

*Photo – Flags*

There, Betsy, sitting in her small, quaint cottage, pulls the vibrant red thread through her needle. She knows she is going to make something great, just not something astoundingly amazing for the rest of America’s lifetime. There, she helps birth the American flag.

Betsy Ross was a woman with a tremendous American work ethic. She was commissioned to weave a banner for the thirteen colonies of America by George Washington, Robert Morris, and a relative named George Ross. The original version of the flag crafted by her hands had thirteen stars for the thirteen colonies configured in a circle representing equality- not one was higher or better than another. The stars were on a blue panel for vigilance, perseverance, and justice. There were seven red stripes for valor and hardiness, and there were six white stripes for purity and innocence. Today, we see a similar figure. We now see a banner with fifty stars for the fifty United States of America, and the thirteen red and white stripes still stand for the original thirteen colonies we expanded from.

Soon after her birth, the Star-Spangled Banner flew at the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Old Glory was there when newcomers to America gained citizenship traditionally at Ellis Island. She waved proudly during both traumatic World Wars. Stars and Bars blew wildly in the wind during the Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. in the late ‘50s and ‘60s. She soared through the terror and sadness of 9/11. She has been with our country for nearly 250 years, even before it was even a country. She waves today, but clings to her flagpole wondering how much time she has left to fly.

She flies every day far and wide across the nation. Yet, some days now, her citizens won’t even hold their hand over their heart and pledge their allegiance to her. Some citizens (or non-citizens) won’t even stand to sing her national anthem. She’s heartbroken. She has stood by her citizens through centuries; she stood for all that our forefathers had wrought for. Now, citizens of her own nation won’t stand by her. She still flaps high though she tattered and torn, downcast and betrayed. She wishes that patriotism and nationalism would strike up again in her land of the free and the home of the brave. She wishes that her citizens had the same faith in America as they did when they had the courage to move to the New World during the Age of Discovery. She wants them to have the same faith in America as they did when they bound together to become a national superpower. Without true patriotism, she feels as if America isn’t what it was originally so special for being- remarkably strong and indomitable. She embraces that flagpole as if it were her final time to fly for the vigilance, perseverance, justice, purity and innocence, valor and hardiness she once lived for. She asks herself, “How long do I have before people of this land don’t need me anymore? Will I be forgotten? Will my country be gone?” Her heart races and races...but then she is awoken from these thoughts by the sounds of crashing fireworks and cheers. She remembers, here, she shamelessly flutters on the Fourth of July. She hears the laughs and cries of the citizens- this is what she lives for. Fireworks explode all around here with bursting colors. She remembers that she is glorified. She is historic. She is loved. She is loved by her valiant and hardy citizens. The citizens who work hard; the ones that worked hard for the land she banter for today. These are the citizens who respect her. These are the citizens who are truly Americans. The ones that struggle, but make it out alive. The ones that are living the American dream. The ones that are trying to make America great again- they respect her. These are the citizens who are proud to be who they are and are proud to raise their precious banner in the air. These are the citizens who fight for our freedom’s everywhere, from in their cubicles all the way out to battlefields overseas. They will fight for the freedom she represents, and they will not allow her to be disrespected.

The flag of the United States of America will fly. Yet, not only will she fly, she will continuously ascend higher than ever before. She will rise in the wind for all she stands for - vigilance, perseverance, justice, purity and innocence, valor and hardiness. She will hold strong to those Virtues forever, regardless of her persecution. And I, a young American, will always defend her.