

I AM AN AMERICAN

ESSAY BY ELIZABETH ELLER EVANS

I am an American,
Listen to my words.
Listen well,
for my country is a strong country,
and my message is a strong message.
I am an American,
and I speak for democracy,
and the dignity of the individual.

I am an American
and my ancestors have given their blood
for freedom.

On the green at Lexington
and the snow at Valley Forge.

On the walls at Fort Sumter
and the fields at Gettysburg,

On the waters of the Marne
and in the shadows of the Argonne,

On the beachheads of Salerno and Normandy
and the sands of Okinawa

On the bare, bleak hills call Pork Chop and Old Baldy, and Heartbreak Ridge
A million and more of my countrymen have
died for freedom.

I am an American
And my country is their eternal monument.

I am an American,
and my ancestors have bequeathed to me:

the laughter of a small boy as he watches a circus clown's antics,

the sweet, delicious coldness
of the first bite of peppermint ice cream on the 4th of July.

the little tenseness of a baseball crowd as the umpire calls
"BATTER UP"

the high school band's rendition of
"The Star's and Stripes Forever" in the Memorial Day Parade,

the clear, sharp ring
of a school bell
on a crisp fall morning:

These
and many other things they fought for
and left for me.

I am an American,
and the fruits of my thought and labor
are mine
to enjoy

I am an American
and my happy land is a land of many realms and mansions.
It is the land of Minnesota corn and potatoes and pasture.
It is the realm of hundreds of acres of golden wheat
stretched across the flat miles of Kansas,
It is the land of precision assembly lines in Detroit
It is the realm of milling cattle in the stockyards of Chicago,
It is the land of glowing skylines of Pittsburgh and Birmingham,
of San Francisco and New York;
And in my churches and homes
are the mansions of heaven

I
am an American
and the love of God
has made me free

I am an American
and my country offers freedom and opportunity
such as NO land before
has ever done.

Freedom to work as mechanic or farmer,
as merchant or truck driver,
Freedom to think as chemist or lawyer,
as doctor or priest,

Freedom to love as child
as parent,
sweetheart,
husband,
wife,

Freedom to speak,
to pray,
to read,
to argue,
to praise,
to criticize

Freedom to eat and sleep,
to work and play
without fear,

Freedom to live one or two hundred twenty million
different lives

I am an American,
and my heritage is of the land and of the spirit,
of the heart,
and of the soul

I speak for democracy
and the dignity of the individual.



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