

The Flames of Freedom by Rachel Hess Wachman, Grade 11

Red runs rampant through my veins,
Igniting a fire so brilliant it blazes blue.
With white tips dancing upwards to oblivion
This intrepid flame persists in its path
Flaring strong despite the wind
Whose gales seek to extinguish
Every last ember of hope.

Bursting forth from my lips pressed tight,
A spark ignites the world
Flickering into being alongside a thousand fragments
Words unspoken, pressed close to shattered hearts
Nurtured for centuries, smoldering –
Barely alive, yet refusing to die.

Suddenly alight, my cherished words
Echo off that silent sky,
That bright blue witness to human folly –
A perfect background for iconic stars
With sturdy stripes, guiding gently
As a million voices mingle together,
A million sparks combust simultaneously
One voice, one flame –
One future.

No one ever got anywhere by staying silent
Least of all, us Americans.
Flourishing in the land of the free
Carving our own paths, forging our own fires
Standing up when necessity demands
Letting our flames breach the sanctuary of our hearts
As they take the world by storm.

Burning red, white, and blue 'till the end.