

# WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

*The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song*

## America

WALT WHITMAN

Page | 1

*Many of our poets have celebrated America's ideals of freedom, equality, and democracy, but none have done so with greater zeal and effusiveness than Walt Whitman (1819–92). This short but dense tribute was first published in 1888 in the New York Herald, and reprinted later that year in Sands at Seventy, the annex to Whitman's Leaves of Grass.*

*What image does the poem use to represent America? What does Whitman mean by "centre of equal daughters, equal sons"? Who is being described—and what is meant—by "Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love"? Why is America called "A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother"? What is added to the portrait and meaning of America by the phrase, "Chair'd in the adamant of Time"? What does this poem celebrate about America? What aspect of America do you think we should most celebrate on its birthday?*

Centre of equal daughters, equal sons,  
All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old,  
Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich,  
Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love,  
A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother,  
Chair'd in the adamant of Time.