

# WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

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

## Crown His Blood-Stained Pillow

JULIA WARD HOWE

*Noted abolitionist and social activist Julia Ward Howe (1819–1910) met Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC in November 1861. The meeting inspired her to write one of the most popular Union songs of the Civil War, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” After Lincoln’s assassination, Howe turned to the sorrowful task of mourning the dead president with this somber poem, first published in 1865.*

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*Looking at the first three stanzas, what was Lincoln’s legacy, and what is his reward? Moving to stanzas 4 through 6, how does the poet instruct us to honor him? Who is the “First Hero” of the final verse, and how does his heroic action compare to that of Lincoln?*

Crown his blood-stained pillow  
With a victor’s palm;  
Life’s receding billow  
Leaves eternal calm.

At the feet Almighty  
Lay this gift sincere;  
Of a purpose weighty,  
And a record clear.

With deliverance freighted  
Was this passive hand,  
And this heart, high-fated,  
Would with love command.

Let him rest serenely  
In a Nation’s care,  
Where her waters queenly  
Make the West most fair.

In the greenest meadow  
That the prairies show,

# WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

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Let his marble's shadow  
Give all men to know:

“Our First Hero, living,  
Made his country free;  
Heed the Second's giving,  
Death for Liberty.”

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