

# WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

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

## This Little Light of Mine

HARRY DIXON LOES

Page | 1

*This gospel song, written circa 1920, by composer and teacher, Harry Dixon Loes (1895–1965), echoes verses from the New Testament that focus on light (for example, Matthew 5:14–16 and Luke 11:33). In contrast to the last song, this one is an “I” song, rather than a “we” song. What is the significance, and what is effect of this personal emphasis, especially if we remember that the song was sung by masses of people singing together? What, exactly, is my “little light”? How does it shine? What is the difference between “letting it shine” and “making it shine”?*

*Listen to Betty Mae Fikes sing the song at a civil rights rally in Atlanta, Georgia in 1964: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyyxkdVSTZw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyyxkdVSTZw).*

This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, shine, shine, let it shine.

God give it to me,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
God give it to me,  
I'm gonna let it shine  
God give it to me,  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Shine, shine, shine, Lord let it shine.

Everywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Everywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Everywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, shine, shine, Lord, let it shine.

All in my home,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
All in my home,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, shine, shine, Lord let it shine.

God said, “Don't hide your light,”  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
“Don't hide your light,”  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, shine, shine, Lord, let it shine.