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The Ash Spangled Skyline

by

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The sky was a navy dusk tattered with ash. But this ash wasn't threatening. The ash didn't waft at me and nip at my heels like ash from an uncontrolled fire does. The ash represented the freedom and pursuit of happiness that laid upon the soil I stood upon. The ash was from fireworks, converting the sky with flickering, colorful lights that lit up my eyes like a Christmas tree does when you first turn off the lights and gaze at it. I felt a euphoria that couldn't be recreated by anything else, and as I gazed at the blooming, crackling flowers above me, I reflected on what this meant.

These fireworks represented those who sacrificed themselves to give me this experience. They represented those who formed the constitution; the foundation and structure of our nation. The constitution is the building blocks that makes our nation special and what it is. Just like learning addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, the base for many mathematical concepts, the constitution is the base for making our nation sturdy and prosperous.

My idea of the American Dream is to live comfortably and free, surrounded by

love and happy people. The constitution helps me to pursue this dream by creating amendments and bills such as the Bill of Rights. The pursuit of happiness is a right given to all who reside on this soil, and this allows for many people around me to in turn be happy. The constitution gives me the right to pursue my dream, too. If certain amendments weren't in place, I wouldn't be free to pursue the life I want to lead.

An example of the constitution giving me many rights to pursue happiness is the Nineteenth Amendment, which allows women to vote. This directly affects me, and I'm very happy to know that my constitution endorses me to vote. Having a say in who leads my country is very important to me. Another example of the constitution having amendments to help me pursue my American dream and pursuit of happiness is the First Amendment. In the First Amendment, it states that citizens have the right to protest, follow their preferred religion, press, assembly, and petition for grievances. These factors are key for feeling free, and my experience in this nation wouldn't be the same if they weren't there.

Reflecting on these amendments, I found myself gazing at the skyline, imagining what the soldiers at the battlefield raising our flag victorious must have been feeling. I can imagine they felt the same awe I felt watching the fireworks blast off. I knew that after leaving the site, I was free to pursue my goals and do whatever I wished within the boundaries of the law. I didn't have to worry about whether a bomb would blow my house up into smithereens, leaving the house looking like cigarette ash that was still flickering and burning. I could go home and dream of the future, reveling in what it could be.

The sky slowed almost to a stop. The ash fell onto the dewy grass and glistened against it. Everyone took in the feeling of being free. As I looked around, the expressions of the people surrounding me were mixed up, but they all displayed an emotion similar to happy. I observed the people leaving, filing out like ants leaving an anthill angrily after getting stepped on. But these people weren't angry. We all collectively felt the elation drifting through the air.

I ended up joining the flock of people leaving. I didn't want to leave the scene, but I decided to use this newfound hope to fuel my dreams instead of mourning the past. As I walked home, visions of soldiers fighting for me tattered my soul. I didn't flinch at the visuals, but I did empathize with them. I felt gratitude and love when I thought of this, not just despair. Despite the loss, the soldiers acquired what they fought for.

After I returned home, I could hear celebrations from all over town. The fireworks, although still going off, died down. My parents were having a conversation about the 13th amendment. Although they weren't victim of slavery as it's traditionally depicted, they felt like they were slaves to their nation, and could solely depend on the government to keep them alive. They felt helpless. But now, both people who felt how they felt and true slaves were free.

My mother walked me down the hallway and to my bedroom that I shared with my little brother.

"Goodnight, sweetie. I'm so glad that we're the land of the free now. I love you two!"

My brother and I were tucked in by my mother and ready to sleep. As we drifted off, we

both exchanged a smile that could only be grinned by those who were set free.