

## 1<sup>st</sup> Place, High School

### Free At Last

by Madeline Hamic

Galloping hooves pound the ground  
As I look up from my sewing to hear the great sound.  
My eyes widen and my mouth comes ajar  
When a messenger shouts out, "We won the war!"

Ecstatically, I try to process the joyous thought,  
While I think of all the men who had bravely fought.  
My father, my uncle, plus numerous others,  
Fighting in many battles to free their brothers.

I remember the first time I realized there was war.  
I had woken at night to hear steps on the floor  
My father was putting soot on his face  
Then he quietly took his ax from its place.

As I watched from my window, my curiosity rose,  
Below, hundreds of men joined him in Indian clothes.  
They snuck to the harbor and boarded some ships,  
Then vigorously chopped and emptied crates with quick flips.

I opened my window and smelled the fragrance of tea,  
My father was pouring it into the sea!  
When he returned quietly, with much emotion,  
I then asked him, "Why did you throw tea into the ocean?"

Surprised, he sat me on his knee as he replied,  
"Daughter, I know it looks like we are on the wrong side,  
But we did this to protest the unfair taxation  
We need our own rights as our own nation."

Two years later, amidst the concerns of war confrontation,  
We had been living near Lexington by my father's regiment station.

After a hard day's work, I was sleeping at last,  
Until I awoke to the shouting of a man riding past.  
"The British are coming!" He repeatedly cried.  
My father and uncle grabbed their guns, and hurried outside.

The next morning, the sound of gunshots pierced the air,  
I snuck outside to see the dangerous affair.  
The smell of gunpowder floated past,  
And a regular's trumpet sounded a blast.

At noon, my father and uncle came back,  
My uncle's arm sat in a sling, bleeding from the attack.  
Although they had not won the fight,  
The militia in Concord defeated the British before night.

Back in Boston, one year later,  
The patriots divided from their British dictator.  
Our town had gathered to hear the article announced,  
A Declaration of Independence from the country we denounced.

As I heard the words echo through the streets,  
I felt passion for my freed country with every heartbeat.  
"The United Colonies ought to be free and Independent states."  
At these words, we cheered for our joyous fate.

Now, in 1781, as I celebrate the war we have won,  
And remember the gruesome battles that are now done,  
I look at our flag, blowing in the breeze,  
I smile, for at last we patriots are finally free!