

# America the Beautiful

Lyrics by Katherine Lee Bates, Music; Samuel A. Ward

*D6sus2* *A* *E*  
O beautiful for spacious skies,

For amber waves of grain,  
*A* *E*

For purple mountain majesties,  
*B7* *F#7* *B*

Above the fruited plain!

*E A* *D E*  
A-merica! America!

God shed His grace on thee,  
*D* *A A7*

And crown thy good with brotherhood,  
*B E A*

From sea to shining sea!

*D6sus2* *A* *E*  
O beautiful for heroes proved,  
*A E*

In liberating strife.

Who more than self their country loved,  
*B7 F#7 B*

And mercy more than life.

*E A* *D E*  
A-merica! America!

God mend thine every flaw,  
*D* *A A*

Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
*B E A*

Thy liberty in law.

*D6sus2* *A* *E*  
O beautiful for patriot dream,

That sees beyond the years.  
*A E*

Thine alabaster cities gleam,  
*B7 F#7 B*

Undimmed by human tears!

*E A* *D E*  
A-merica! America!

May God thy gold refine,  
*D* *A A7*

Till all success be nobleness,  
*B E A*

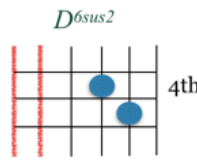
And every gain divine.

*E A* *D E*  
America! America!

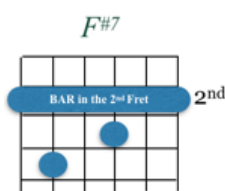
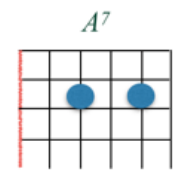
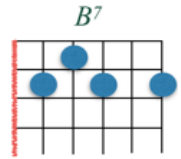
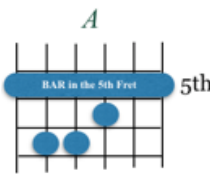
God shed Thy grace on thee,  
*D* *A A7*

And crown thy good with brotherhood,  
*B E A*

From sea to shining sea!



Play this A in the 5th fret when it follows a D6sus2



## History

The lyrics of “America the Beautiful” were written as a poem by Kathryn Lee Bates, and the music was composed by church organist and choirmaster

Samuel A. Ward.



In 1893, at the age of 36, Bates, an English professor at Wellesley College, had taken a train trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to teach a short summer school session at Colorado College.



Several of the sights on her trip inspired her, and they found their way into her poem, including the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the “White City” with its promise of the future contained within its alabaster buildings; the wheat fields of America’s heartland Kansas, through which her train was riding on July 16; and the majestic view of the Great Plains from high atop Zebulon’s Pikes Peak.

The first draft of “America the Beautiful” was hastily jotted down in a notebook during that summer her hotel room at the original Antlers Hotel. Later she remembered:

“One day some of the other teachers and I decided to go on a trip to 14,000-foot Pike’s Peak. We hired a prairie wagon. Near the top we had to leave the wagon and go the rest of the way on mules. I was very tired. But when I saw the view, I felt great joy. All the wonder of America seemed displayed there, with the sea-like expanse.”

The poem titled *Pikes Peak* was initially published two years later in *The Congregationalist*, to commemorate the Fourth of July in 1895. It quickly caught the public’s fancy. Amended versions titled *America* were published in 1904 and 1913.

Samuel Augustus Ward is remembered for the 1882 tune “Materna,” which he intended as a setting for the hymn “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem.” This was published ten years later, in 1892. Later still, in 1910, after Ward had died, the tune was combined by a publisher with the Katharine Bates’ poem *America*, to create the patriotic song “America the Beautiful”. Ward and Bates never met.

*Wikipedia*