

I Used to Love America More

by Burt Prelutsky

I love America, but honesty compels me to admit I used to love it even more.

I loved it more when people could admit they were patriots without being called xenophobes. I loved it more when a person could say that nobody should be allowed to sneak into the country without being labeled a racist. I loved it more when one could point out that if people aren't allowed to profit from a crime, why are the parents of so-called anchor babies the exception?

I loved America more when a person could say that he thought a culture that had given the world Shakespeare, Rembrandt, DaVinci, Dickens, Bach, Beethoven, the telephone, the electric light, the automobile, the jet plane, rockets to the moon, cell phones, radar and a cure for polio, was superior to one that gave the world Sharia law, suicide bombers and clitorectomies, without being called a jingoist.

I loved America more when people didn't worry so much about infringing on the rights of convicted pedophiles, and someone besides me wondered why the average prison sentence doled out to a child molester was a scant three years.

I loved America more when people listened to music filled with melody, harmony and decipherable lyrics, and went to movies about recognizable human beings coping with recognizable human problems.

I loved America more when if the phone rang, it was very likely someone you wanted to speak to, and not some shill calling on behalf of some hack politician trolling for money.

I loved America more before baseball players used steroids,

and before millions of fans cheered them on as they cheated their way into the record books, erasing the achievements of people like Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron and Roger Maris.

I loved America more before parents thought winning was so important they'd hold their kids back from entering school so they could be bigger and faster than their classmates and wind up being high school football stars.

I loved America more before other parents considered honest competition so destructive, they decided scores shouldn't be kept at their kids' sporting events, and that pass/fail should replace grades in the classroom.

I loved America more when youngsters had to earn respect, and high self-esteem wasn't considered a birthright.

I loved America more before Barack Obama told us a pack of lies in order to get elected, and when the lies were eventually exposed, many millions of Americans really didn't care.

I loved America more when vulgarians, bullies and half-wits, were people to be avoided, and not admired, mimicked, and rewarded with their own TV shows and fan clubs.

I loved America more when people came here to fit in, learn the language and change their national loyalty, not merely their address.

I loved America more when Supreme Court justices were expected to be experts when it came to the U.S. Constitution, not a bunch of bleeding hearts who could moonlight as social workers or, God forbid, community organizers.

I used to love America more when we all admired people who shouted "Give me Liberty, or give me Death!" to King George and "Nuts!" to the Nazis, and not someone who bows, scrapes and apologizes to our enemies.

Finally, I loved America more when America seemed to love itself more.