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**Runner-up, Asian American Awareness Month Essay Competition 2002**

The Stained American Flag

I was asleep in my soft, pink, bed at 9:15 in the morning  
A single telephone call from my dad shocked me, as I was absorbing  
The atrocities that occurred on September 11, 2001, a national tragedy  
That left the United States peering at the broken pieces of a catastrophe.

I could not and would not leave my room that day.  
I felt an overwhelming need to watch the news and stay  
In close reach of an answer, a reason to explain  
If everything happens for a reason, why am I at a state of disdain?

I tried to move on with my life, I stopped watching the news.  
But the stories were still passed along, but now with a new fuse  
Americans were harassing, killing, and abusing  
Anyone who slightly resembled an enemy, now our country is truly losing.

Have we not learned from the past, during World War II?  
Where thousands of Japanese Americans were subdued  
Like animals, rounded up and shipped out in the middle of the night  
Stripped down naked of their constitutional rights.

Over 120,00 Japanese Americans were suspected of spying.  
Ironically, evidence shows that not a single one was eying  
Against the American government, Instead 10 Caucasian men  
Were the traitors; 120,000 caged unjustly for ten.

Bad things happen all the time, I know  
But look at our American history, it shows  
That the injustice 120,000 Japanese Americans endured  
Will continue to happen in the present and the future, I am assured.

Ignorance has no color I've learned  
But how many times does someone have to be burned?  
Before we realize that hatred is no answer to anything  
Negativity, death, and a cold spirit are all it will bring.

The past is the past; there is no room for change  
But I still believe that we Americans can arrange  
For our country to overcome our faults and gain some wisdom  
That we can incorporate towards an equal and just kingdom.