

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2025-5-6)

The song “The House I Live In” (otherwise known as “What is America to Me?”) was written in 1942, and was recorded by Frank Sinatra. Words by Lewis Allan, music by Earl Robinson. The song deals with what America is to all of us, regardless of our background. It was originally an instrument for promoting tolerance.

First presented publicly at the Baker Street Irregulars annual dinner in New York City, January 10, 2003 with Henry Boote on piano.

**The Canon I Read
(The House I Live In)**

Lyrics by W. Scott Monty, BSI © 2002

What is America to me?
A name, a map, or the flag I see
A certain word, democracy
What is America to me?

The house I live in
A plot of earth, a street
The grocer and the butcher
Or the people that I meet

The children in the playground
The faces that I see
All races and religions
That's America to me

The place I work in
The worker by my side
The little town the city
Where my people lived and died

The howdy and the handshake
The air of feeling free
And the right to speak your mind out
That's America to me

The things I see about me
The big things and the small
That little corner newsstand
Or the house a mile tall

The wedding and the churchyard
The laughter and the tears
And the dream that's been a growing
For more than two hundred years

The town I live in
The street, the house, the room
The pavement of the city
Or the garden all in bloom

The church the school the clubhouse
The millions lights I see
But especially the people
That's America to me

What is Sherlock Holmes to me?
A pipe, a cap, or the man I see
A certain word: elementary
What is Sherlock Holmes to me?

The Canon I read,
A flat on Baker Street,
Lestrade and Mrs. Hudson,
Or the people that I meet.

The scion in my hometown,
The faces that I see,
All races and religions,
That's Sherlock Holmes to me.

The papers I write,
The quizzes that I take,
The journal I subscribe to,
Or the toasts I have to make.

Wonter, Cushing, Rathbone,
Brett, Gillette and Lee,
And Paget's many portraits,
That's Sherlock Holmes to me.

The things I see about me,
The big things and the small,
Each one provides a reference
To a tale that I recall.

Napoleons and vampires,
The thumbs of engineers,
And the dream that's been a growing
For a hundred twenty years

Our dear old Wiggins,
The weekend filled with food,
The final cocktail party
Is a fine way to conclude.

The Band the Pips the Beeches,
Irregulars I see;
It's especially the people
That's Sherlock Holmes to me.