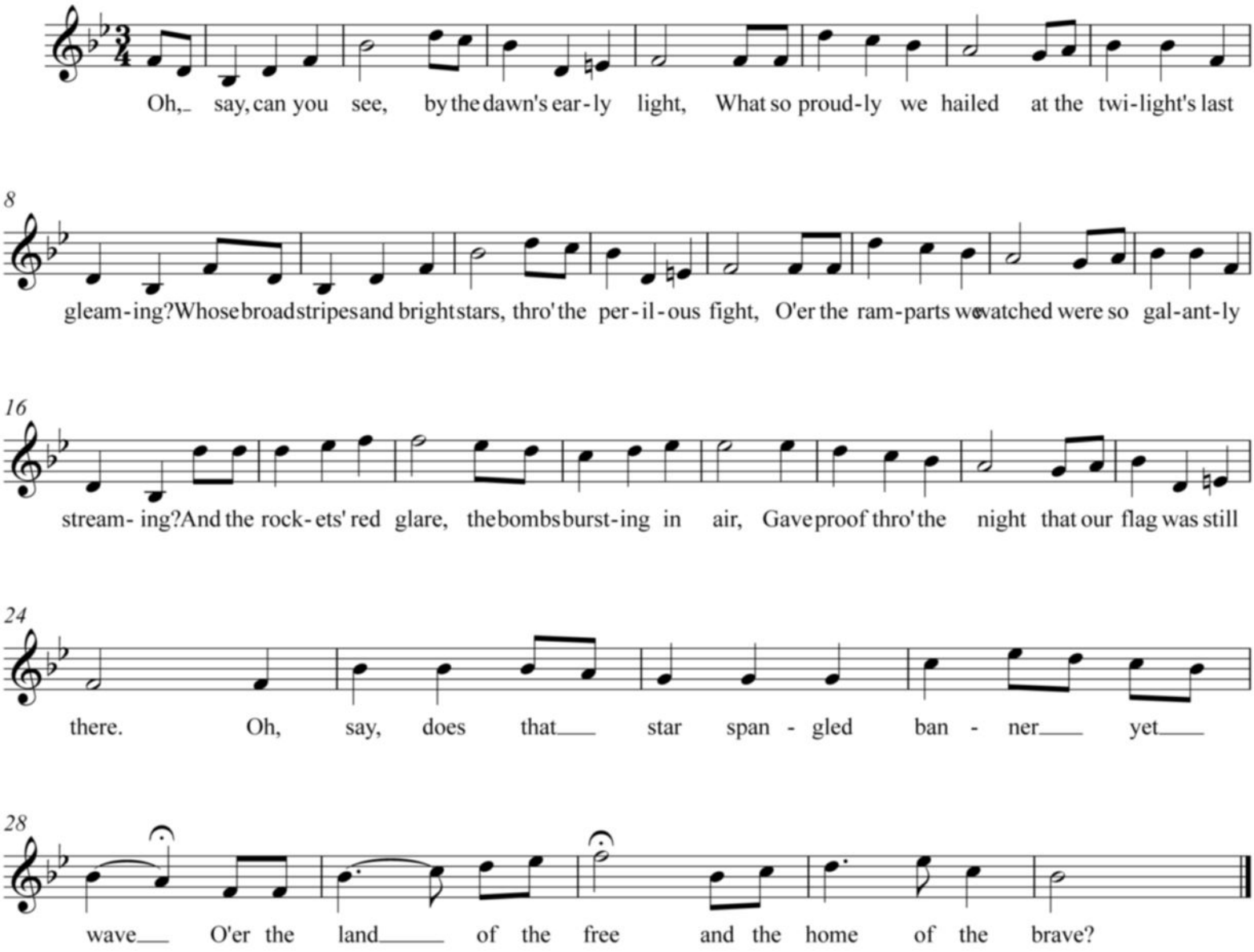
The Star-Spangled Banner

The words of "The Star Spangled Banner" were written by Mr. Key in 1814 under stirring circumstances. He Was detained on board one of the British ships which attacked Fort McHenry. All night the bombardment continued, indicating that the fort had not surrendered. Toward the morning the firing ceased, and Mr. Key awaited dawn in great suspense. When light came, he saw that "our flag was still there," and in the fervor of the moment he wrote the lines of our national song. the tune is ascribed by the weight of authority to John Stafford Smith, an English composer who set it about 1780.

Francis Scott Key

John Stafford Smith



2. On the shore, dimly seen thro' the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner: oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

3. Oh, thus be it e'er when free-men shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that has made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just;
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

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Source: Dykema, Peter, Will Earhart, Osbourne McConathy, and Hollis Dann. *I Hear America Singing; 55 Songs and Choruses for Community Singing.* Boston,: C. C. Birchard & Company, 1917.