

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Paul Revere Riders

[Adapted from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*  
by Christopher J. Patton, Longfellow neighborhood, Minneapolis, MN]

Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the twenty-first cent'ry's Paul Revere:  
When hardly a person turned out to toast,  
Those who rode from coast to coast  
On iron steeds of rolling thunder  
Powered by petrol, driven by wonder.

On perils from without and perils from within,  
Frosty Woodridge and friends shared their chagrin  
On how our nation of promise had fast come unbound:  
The Constitution guarded by a government unsound.

"When the rate of immigration exceeds assimilation,  
Lawless toleration destroys a mighty nation."

So America bleeds white, blue and red  
As senseless arrogance abroad and witless home policies fed  
The rapid loss of liberty, wealth and identity  
While the press and people professed pure stupidity.

"Racist," they shout as they disgraced Old Glory:  
No one wanted to hear through the true story.  
In the midst of a country suffering wide apathy,  
The Riders set out with a mission of empathy,  
Truth and education to save our republic  
From certain dissolution and mass urban panic.

From Denver they roared, mile high to the sea,  
Conviction plus action to save liberty:  
Aliens illegal invade and break down  
Vital services provided by city, small town.

It's not just the language, a symptom we hear;  
It's also the values, the norms we hold dear.  
It's not just the wealth; the abundance we share.  
It's the habits of decency, the opportunities we dare  
As Americans to dream for ourselves and our children –  
Those middle class victories, hard won they have been!

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You can't blame the alien who illegally crossed over:  
He and she mostly dream of a life that is better.  
But what emotionally convinces on a personal scale  
Cannot justify an illegal policy threat to our country.

In a flood of immigration, societies fail  
To provide basic services, order, opportunity  
To those here already, who settled quite legally –  
However they came or were born, hurt equally.

The Riders' signs say, "Stop Illegal Immigration: Ask Me How"  
Congress stands at a crossroads of decisions made now!

How many people make up enough?  
Don't dally on decisions necessity-tough.  
Our wells run dry of sweet water and money  
And all we enjoy, like a worker bee's honey.

Citizens arise, vote for borders secure,  
So that our liberties and rights may yet endure.  
Global poverty overflows the lines in the sand,  
Our enemies curse us with an upraised hand.

The endless woes of the world lap at our shore,  
But there's no way to help it by making us poor.  
Our government's broke, but the rich get richer.  
And most folks do nothing: butts passive get fatter.

Will the public just snore?  
This warning ignore?  
As government lackeys, drunk in arrogant power,  
Blabber sound-bitten sweet words soon to turn sour.

When those politically sweet lies so glibly swallowed,  
Turn to bitter reality burning down to the belly  
Of citizens' lost liberty and an economy hollowed:  
Yes, truth will out finally with a stink more than smelly.

"Don't slumber away, awake while there's day,"  
That's the message they brought every stop on their way.

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And so through the summer did the iron steeds rumble  
Reaching every state capitol, they often met trouble.

Round stately domes the Riders would circle,  
And before those there they proposed a new miracle:  
A cry of defiance and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo for evermore!

For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
Through all of our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The thunderous roar from an iron steed,  
The country-wide warning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's Paul Revere.