

FROM EAST TO WEST

“Give me your huddled masses
who are yearning to breathe free ...”
What do these lines mean to you?
What do they mean to me?

My uncles Abe and Mark
Were two men I never knew
They set sail for America
When my mum was only two.

There wasn't much to keep them here
They were living in poverty
So they said goodbye to their parents
To sail across the sea.

They set off on an arduous journey
Inspired by their dad
Who'd walked from Latvia to London
When he was just a lad.

The Statue of Liberty beckoned
She held out her welcoming hand
And my uncles journeyed thousands of miles
To reach that far off land.

They set sail for America
Where the streets were paved with gold
Their parents never saw them again
And my mum was two years old.

They embarked at Ellis Island
As thousands had done before
And made their way to Chicago
Where they worked in a barber's store.

It's hard to imagine in this digital age
What life must have been like then
With only the post to keep in touch
And to never see loved ones again!

Now over a century later
Their legacy survives to this day
I now have countless cousins
Throughout the USA!

*Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

These words inscribed on The Statue of Liberty
are from "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus (1849-1887).
