

Patriot Ford

by Linda Simoni-Wastila

Flags rippled in the faint evening breeze. In the dim light of the just-set sun, the plot gleamed with a newly-buffed sheen. People moved with reverence among the flags. Except for the children, who ran with yelps of laughter. Eugene Kosinski looked down from his bunting-draped platform and grimaced, worried about the kids ruining the refined ambience he had worked so hard to create. He worried whether too many people would visit, worried not enough would come. Most of all, he worried he had given away too much. No, no... tonight was the least he could do. The dark deepened. He reached for his cell phone. *Now:*

The three spotlights flicked on. The huge flag hoisted up the pole, America the Beautiful thrummed the night. A large ooh wafted into the air. The crowd stood reverent, even the kids, hands held hearts, and gazed at the red and blue filling the field of night. The song ended with raucous applause. Eugene's chest swelled with pride as he observed his seven-acre empire of F-150s, Explorers, and Fiestas glittering under the light beams criss-crossing the sky. *Just wait until the free hotdogs*, he thought and rubbed his hands together. *Just wait until the balloon launch.*

