Age of Reason – Culminating Project

For this assignment, you will be creating your own song regarding the American Revolution. Follow the sample song as a model for length and for the inclusion of poetic devices as you see fit. With a total of 60 points available, I will be looking for creativity and effort, style (word choice and effective use of literary devices), and content (an obvious familiarity with the issues of the time period).

The art from the album cover is by Delacroix and it's called "La Liberté guidant le peuple" and commemorates the July 1830 revolution in France. The woman in the middle is Liberty. From this, we can argue that the song “Viva la Vida” is primarily about the French Revolution. (The song can be interpreted in various ways, but for our purposes, this will be our focus.) It references the danger of absolute power, and the drastic measures taken by regular citizens during a revolution. It also has many biblical references.

The example song is written from the point of view of the king who has been overthrown as a result of a revolution. You can choose who is “narrating” or singing your song. You may wish it to be from the point of view of the British Monarchy (King George III), average Americans, or one of the Americans we’ve read excerpts from in this unit (Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, or Patrick Henry).

You may wish for the lyrics to follow the music from the original song, or set it to your own tune if you are feeling creative.

For this assignment, you must include at least 5 references to the authors and their works from the unit. You may include any historical references and direct quotes from the reading assignments that you wish to include. You are welcome to use any materials from class (book, handouts, notes, etc) except for your neighbors. You must work alone. Below, you will find a list of commonly used poetic devices.

**Alliteration** - The repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words. Example: “Fetched fresh, as I suppose, off some sweet wood.” Hopkins, “In the Valley of the Elwy.”

**Assonance** - The repetition of similar vowel sounds in a sentence or a line of poetry or prose, as in "I rose and told him of my woe." Whitman’s "When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer" contains assonantal "I's" in the following lines: "How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick. / Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself."

**Couplet** - A pair of rhymed lines that may or may not constitute a separate stanza in a poem. Shakespeare’s sonnets end in rhymed couplets, as in "For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings / That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

**Enjambment** - A run-on line of poetry in which logical and grammatical sense carries over from one line into the next. An enjambed line differs from an end-stopped line in which the grammatical and logical sense is completed within the line.

**Metaphor** - A comparison between essentially unlike things without an explicitly comparative word such as like or as. An example is "My love is a red, red rose,"

**Onomatopoeia** - The use of words to imitate the sounds they describe. Words such as buzz and crack are examples.

**Rhyme** - The matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words. Also, you may find it is impossible to use true rhymes. You will notice that even in the sample lyrics, sometimes weak (or slant or half) rhymes are used. See if you can tell which lines use this device!

**Rhythm** - The recurrence of accent or stress in lines of verse.

**Simile** - A figure of speech involving a comparison between unlike things using like, as, or as though. An example: "My love is like a red, red rose."
Viva la Vida - Coldplay

I used to rule the world
Seas would rise when I gave the word
Now in the morning I sleep alone
Sweep the streets I used to own

I used to roll the dice
Feel the fear in my enemies eyes
Listen as the crowd would sing
"Now the old king is dead! Long live the King!"

One minute I held the key
Next the walls were closed on me
And I discovered that my castles stand
Upon pillars of salt and pillars of sand

I hear Jerusalem bells are ringing
Roman Cavalry choirs are singing
Be my mirror, my sword, and shield
My missionaries in a foreign field
For some reason I can’t explain
Once you know there was never,
never an honest word
That was when I ruled the world

It was the wicked and wild wind
Blew down the doors to let me in
Shattered windows and the sound of drums
People could not believe what I’d become
Revolutionaries wait
For my head on a silver plate
Just a puppet on a lonely string
Oh who would ever want to be King?

I hear Jerusalem bells are ringing
Roman Cavalry choirs are singing
Be my mirror, my sword, and shield
My missionaries in a foreign field
For some reason I can’t explain
I know Saint Peter won’t call my name
Never an honest word
But that was when I ruled the world

Hear Jerusalem bells are ringing
Roman Cavalry choirs are singing
Be my mirror my sword and shield
My missionaries in a foreign field
For some reason I can’t explain
I know Saint Peter won’t call my name

Never an honest word
But that was when I ruled the world