

AMERICAN WOMEN POETS

of the Nineteenth Century



An Anthology

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Elizabeth Oakes-Smith

~~By the enraptured throng,  
When thou in matchless grace  
Didst move with lyre and song,  
And monarchs gave thee place?  
What hast thou left, proud one? what token?  
Alas! a lyre and heart—both broken!~~

THE POET

Non Vox Sed Votum<sup>1</sup>

*It is the belief of the vulgar that when the nightingale sings, she leans her breast upon a thorn.*

Sing, sing—Poet, sing!  
With the thorn beneath thy breast,  
Robbing thee of all thy rest;  
Hidden thorn for ever thine,  
Therefore dost thou sit and twine  
Lays of sorrowing—  
Lays that wake a mighty gladness,  
Spite of all their mournful sadness.  
Sing, sing—Poet sing!  
It doth ease thee of thy sorrow—  
“Darkling” singing till the morrow;  
Never weary of thy trust,  
Hoping, loving as thou must,  
Let thy music ring;  
Noble cheer it doth impart,

1. Lat., not the voice but the vow.

Elizabeth Oakes-Smith

Strength of will and strength of heart.

Sing, sing—Poet, sing!

Thou art made a human voice;

Wherefore shouldst thou not rejoice

That the tears of thy mute brother

Bearing pangs he may not smother,

Through thee are flowing—

For his dim, unuttered grief

Through thy song hath found relief?

Sing, sing—Poet, sing!

Join the music of the stars,

Wheeling on their sounding cars;

Each responsive in its place

To the choral hymn of space—

Lift, oh lift thy wing—

And the thorn beneath thy breast.

Though it pierce, shall give thee rest.

*STRENGTH FROM THE HILLS*

Come up unto the hills—thy strength is there.

Oh, thou hast tarried long,

Too long, amid the bowers and blossoms fair,

With notes of summer song.

Why dost thou tarry there? what though the bird

Pipes matin in the vale—

The plough-boy whistles to the loitering herd,

As the red daylights fail—

Yet come unto the hills, the old strong hills,

And leave the stagnant plain;

Come to the gushing of the newborn rills,

As sing they to the main;