

The New Colossus

Written by Emma Lazarus in 1883

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowes world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “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!”



This sonnet was included as part of an art and literature auction that was designed to raise money to fund the construction of the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. In 1903, a plaque bearing the poem was placed on the interior wall of the pedestal. The original “colossus” was the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.