

**1846**

**“OH MOTHER OF A MIGHTY RACE”**

**William Cullen Bryant**

**Bryant, William Cullen (1794-1878) - American poet and editor of the New York Evening Post who practiced law before devoting his life to writing. A master of blank verse, Bryant's earliest works are considered his best. "Oh Mother of a Mighty Race" (1846) - A protest against Britain's actions during American boundary disputes in Aroostock County and Oregon. Opening lines: Oh mother of a mighty race, / Yet lovely in thy youthful grace!...**

## OH MOTHER OF A MIGHTY RACE

Oh mother of a mighty race,  
 Yet lovely in thy youthful grace!  
 The elder dames, thy haughty peers,  
 Admire and hate thy blooming years.  
 With words of shame  
 And taunts of scorn they join thy name.

For on thy cheeks the glow is spread  
 That tints thy morning hills with red;  
 Thy step- the wild-deer's rustling feet  
 Within thy woods are not more fleet;  
 Thy hopeful eye  
 Is bright as thine own sunny sky.

Ay, let them rail- those haughty ones,  
 While safe thou dwellest with thy sons.  
 They do not know how loved thou art,  
 How many a fond and fearless heart  
 Would rise to throw  
 Its life between thee and the foe.

They know not, in their hate and pride,  
 What virtues with thy children bide;  
 How true, how good, thy graceful maids  
 Make bright, like flowers, the valley-shades;  
 What generous men  
 Spring, like thine oaks, by hill and glen;

What cordial welcomes greet the guest  
 By thy lone rivers of the West;  
 How faith is kept, and truth revered,  
 And man is loved, and God is feared,  
 In woodland homes,  
 And where the ocean border foams.

There's freedom at thy gates and rest  
 For Earth's down-trodden and opprest,  
 A shelter for the hunted head,  
 For the starved laborer toil and bread.  
 Power, at thy bounds,  
 Stops and calls back his baffled hounds.

Oh, fair young mother! on thy brow  
Shall sit a nobler grace than now.  
Deep in the brightness of the skies  
The thronging years in glory rise,  
And, as they fleet,  
Drop strength and riches at thy feet.

Thine eye, with every coming hour,  
Shall brighten, and thy form shall tower;  
And when thy sisters, elder born,  
Would brand thy name with words of scorn,  
Before thine eye,  
Upon their lips the taunt shall die.

**THE END**