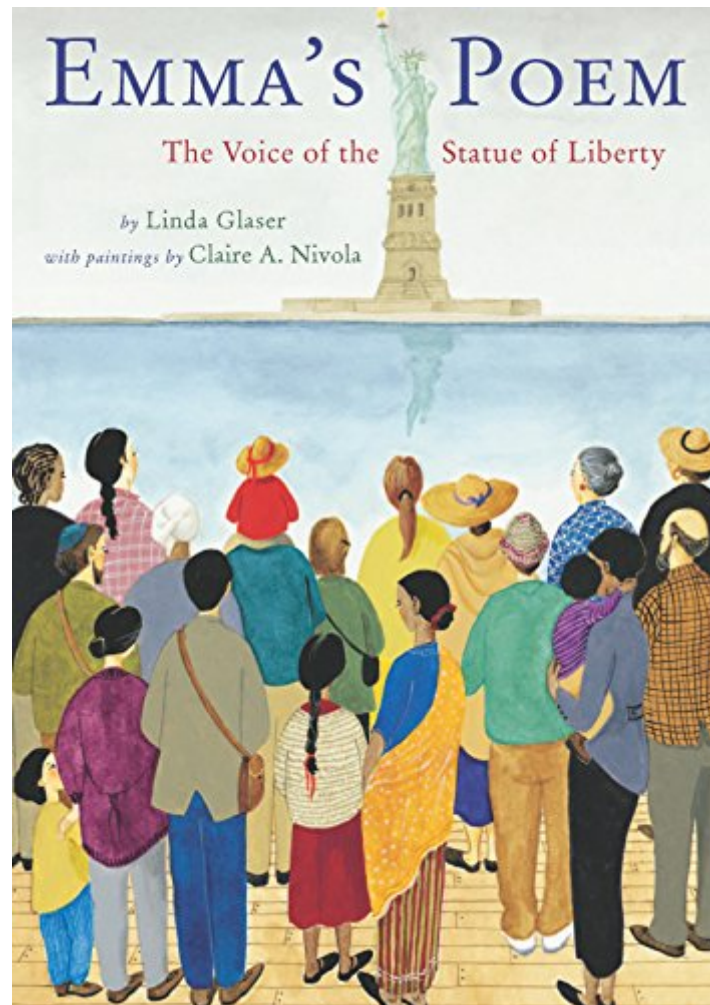


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# Emma's Poem (Jane Addams Award Book (Awards))



## Synopsis

Give me your tired, your poor  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...  
Who wrote these words? And why? In 1883, Emma Lazarus, deeply moved by an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, wrote a sonnet that was to give voice to the Statue of Liberty. Originally a gift from France to celebrate our shared national struggles for liberty, the Statue, thanks to Emma's poem, slowly came to shape our hearts, defining us as a nation that welcomes and gives refuge to those who come to our shores. This title has been selected as a Common Core Text Exemplar (Grades 4-5, Poetry)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Emma Lazarus was a young woman full of passion, integrity and had a very strong message to be told. She was a writer, a Jew, and most importantly a woman who wanted her voice to be heard. She lived in New York City during the late 1880's in a family full of fortune and wealth. One day she visited the New York Harbor where she saw many impoverished immigrants, Jews and non-Jews who had traveled from afar for freedom in America. She began to help these people, which then inspired her to write one of the most powerful poems. This poem, The New Colossus, gave the

Statue of Liberty a voice to welcome all new immigrants to the United States. In Emma's Poem, author Linda Glaser, writes about Emma Lazarus as a little girl and then a grown woman who creates a beautiful sonnet that is now inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. Claire Nivola, the Illustrator creates elegant full-page illustrations done in watercolors and Gouache. The magical pictures are painting like in that they make the story come to life with intricate details. The pictures along with the words tell a beautiful story that is part of our American history and one that should never be forgotten. This book is recommended for children ages 4-8 and highly recommended for all libraries. Linda Glaser is a fabulous author that has written many other wonderful picture books including: Mrs. Greenberg's Messy Hanukkah, The Borrowed Hanukkah Latkes, Our Big Home: An Earth Poem, Bridge to America and many others. Emma's Poem includes an author's note at the back of the book along with the full text of the poem, The New Colossus. Most important, this story teaches children how Emma's poem and the Statue of Liberty came together and are an important part of our history and life.

Emma could count herself among the fortunate few. She was always dressed nicely and had a lot of food. Best of all she had "plenty of love from her family." They lived in a large beautiful home in New York City. Naturally, Emma thought that everyone lived liked they did. When she grew up, she became a "well-known writer," but she began to notice that not all people were as fortunate as she and her family had been. When she visited Ward's Island in New York Harbor she was greatly saddened by the poor, sick, and tired immigrant population she saw who came in search of a better life on the shores of the United States. Many, like Emma, were Jewish and had escaped the madness of Eastern Europe. They were intelligent, but came with nothing. Many came without their "friends and relatives who had been killed." It was during the 1880s that she began to work with them. She helped them learn English, find work and in return she found friends. People looked their noses down on this type of practice and even more so on the people she helped. One day Emma "heard about a statue being constructed in France as a gift of friendship for the United States." In an effort to raise money, famous writers were asked to write something in commemoration. Emma had an idea . . . This is a stunning portrait of a woman, a people, and time so very important in American history. Of course, Emma is the one who penned the poem that reads in part, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses . . ." Undoubtedly few people know about Emma Lazarus, a woman all but forgotten by history, but her famous poem still blazes strong. The art work was strong, bold, and depicted those huddled masses perfectly. In the back of the book is a photograph of Emma, an interesting biographical vignette by the author, and the poem in its entirety. This is a

wonderful historical book that deserved a place on your classroom, library, or homeschool shelves!

Before reading Linda Glaser's simple, yet eloquent picture book, *Emma's Poem*, one might think one knew most of what there was to know about the Statue of Liberty: gift from France, stands in New York harbor, has a poem on its pedestal written by Emma Lazarus. Glaser's book tells the story behind the woman who wrote that poem. Emma Lazarus grew up in the lap of luxury. Her visit, one day, to Ward's Island, entry port for many tired, hungry and poor immigrants, had a profound effect on her. These immigrants, mainly Jews like herself, had been terribly mistreated in their home countries. Emma felt compelled to help them. But immigrants were not well received in Emma's social circle, an image she vowed to help change. When asked to contribute a poem to an anthology being put together to raise money for the Statue of Liberty pedestal, Emma wrote her now-famous words to welcome all immigrants to our country, words so powerful they were eventually etched on a plaque attached to the pedestal itself. All immigrants would now read Emma's welcoming words: Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. Glaser's descriptive text, combined with illustrator Clair A. Nivola's careful attention to the historical details of the late 1800's, make *Emma's Poem* a book not to be missed. Although the book is intended for ages 4-8, anyone interested in American history and/or the Statue of Liberty would definitely enjoy reading this wonderful journey back through time to Emma Lazarus's world.

Reviewed by Marcia Berneger

Very nicely done picture book biography of Emma Lazarus, best known for writing the poem on the base of the Statue of Liberty that has become nearly as famous as the statue herself. We see Emma as a small child, with "plenty of everything," growing up in an environment of people who had "plenty of everything." We see her in her privileged setting, but then Emma visits Ward's Island and meets very poor immigrants, Jews like herself who had made the long, hard journey to America. Emma wants to help them, and begins to write about the immigrants in the newspaper and in poems to raise awareness of the poverty in which they lived. When Emma hears about the statue being constructed in France, she is asked to write something for a collection that would be sold to help pay to construct a pedestal for the great statue. Although the statue had nothing to do with immigrants, Emma imagined how it would be the first thing new arrivals would see as they entered New York Harbor, and decided to write a poem from the point of view of the statue. The author describes how Emma didn't see the statue erected, but after her death the poem was engraved on a plaque and placed inside the entrance to the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty for visitors to read.

The poem became so famous that schoolchildren learned it and the poem was even set to music by Irving Berlin. The book includes an author's note with additional historical details and of course the complete text of the poem, entitled "The New Colossus."

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