

Votes for Women!

For decades fought the petticoats
with speeches brandished from their throats,
petitions, marches, banner quotes
“for women’s votes, for women’s votes!”

In Seneca Falls, the anthem grew
as *Declaration* words make new
with *Sentiments* for women too—
old ways undo, old ways undo.

In eighteen sixty-nine (back then!)
Wyoming gals could vote like men.
In time, states number more than ten—
lace votes again, lace votes again.

The skirts begin to agitate.
Amendment draft sparks long debate,
words Susan pens in '78.
Yet vote must wait, yet vote must wait.

With tactics new comes Alice Paul,
she leads the charge to overhaul
the women’s suffrage scene; her call,
grant rights to all, grant rights to all.

Though struggles long, vict’ry at last,
a milestone reached, when Congress passed
Nineteenth—disenfranchisement dashed!
Vote-hope recast, vote-hope recast.

But states must ratify these words,
required approval by three-fourths.
Though Illinois shows up rehearsed,
Wisconsin’s first, Wisconsin’s first!

In Tennessee, amendment rides
on yellow roses. Starry-eyed,
one red rose “yellows,” turns the tide—
now ratified, now ratified!

In 1920, plays the band—
at polling places, *she* can stand!
Her ballots count, placed by *her* hand—
across the land, across the land.

So sweet the millions, votes hard won
for women—yet, the cry begun
sings on so citizens, bar none,
cast votes each one, cast votes each one.

Lucy Tyrrell
Bayfield Poet Laureate
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