

Local writer and editor Drew Ross found such a poem in the February 20, 1850, edition of *The Minnesota Pioneer* and [posted images of it on his Twitter account](#).

Here's my transcription of its turgid and painful words:

For the Pioneer.

The Seal of Minnesota.

By Mrs. Eastman.

(The design is: The Indian retreating as civilization advances—the white man, the plough, axe, powder horn and rifle, in the foreground—St. Anthony's Falls in the distance—

Give way, give way young warrior,

Thou and thy steed give way—

Rest not, though lingers on the hills,

The red sun's parting ray.

The rocky bluff and prairie land

The white man claims them now,

The symbols of his course are here,

The rifle, axe and plough.

Not thine, the waters bright whose laugh

Is ringing in thy ear;

Not thine the otter and the lynx,

The wolf and timid deer.

The forest tree, the fairy ring,

The sacred isle and mound

Have passed into another's hands—

Another claimant found.

Give way, give way young warrior—

Our title would you seek?

'Tis "the rich against the poor,

And the strong against the weak."

We need thy noble rivers,
Thy prairies green and wide,
And thy dark and frowning forests
That skirt the valley's side.

The Red man's course is onward—
Nor stayed his footsteps be,
Till by his rugged hunting ground
Beats the relentless sea!
We claim his noble heritage,
And Minnesota's land
Must pass with all its untold wealth
To the white man's grasping hand.

Give way, give way young warrior
Thy father's bones may rest
No longer here, where earth has clasped
Them, closely to her breast—
Here, were thy fiercest battles fought—
Here, though through the valleys rung
The voices of the victors brave,
As they, their triumph sung.

Here too with long and braided hair
Thy maidens in the dance
Rivalled the wild deer's fleetest step,
The wild deer's brightest glance.
And here they gathered oft at eve
From aged lips to hear
How flowed the warrior's heart's best blood,
How fell the maiden's tear.

Give way—I know a thousand ties
Most lovingly must cling,
I know a gush of sorrow deep
Such memories must bring.
Thou and thy noble race from earth
Must soon be passed away,
As echoes die upon the hills,
Or darkness follows day.

Yet hear me still, young warrior,
Thou and thy steed give way—
Rest not, though lingers on the hills
The red sun's parting ray.
The rocky bluff and prairie land
The white man claims them now,
The symbols of his course are here—
The rifle, axe and plough.

Washington, D.C., Jan. 10th, 1850

Ross identifies the poet as Mary Henderson Eastman, whose husband was Seth Eastman, an Army captain put in charge of Fort Snelling from 1841–1848.

Mary Eastman descended from a family of enslavers in the Tidewater area of northern Virginia, and was a writer of some renown. While she spent her time in Minnesota investigating the Indigenous people, her best-known work appears to have been a response to Harriet Beacher Stowe's abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, called *Aunt Phillis's Cabin: or, Southern Life As It Is* (1852). As it says on her [encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com) page, the book "uses a romantic plot to present an idealized picture of slave life and to introduce stock defenses of slavery."

She wrote a number of books about the Dakota, with titles like *Dahcotah, or Life and Legends of the Sioux Around Fort Snelling*; *Romance of Indian Life*; *The American Aboriginal Portfolio*; and *Chicora and Other Regions of the Conquerors and the Conquered*. Various web pages about her indicate that she learned at least some of the Dakota language while she was at Fort Snelling, and that some of her writings were thought to be sympathetic to the people, particularly the women. I wonder how they would read today.

But obviously, this poem indicates she thought their plight over all was inevitable and natural (the way "darkness follows day"), and even correct ("we need" your rivers, etc.), though the words Manifest Destiny did not appear in her rhyming scheme.

The grasping hand of the white man needs what you had, so too bad for you. Get out of the way. We will drive you to the sea, as your "noble race" somehow "must be passed away."

In his Twitter post, Ross also notes that the version of the seal created for the territory was revised a few years later when Minnesota became a state, and that the changes were visually significant. It's hard to believe they made it semiotically worse, but they did.

Source: <https://daughternumberthree.blogspot.com/2021/11/a-poem-about-state-seal.html?fbclid=IwAR1tN4Em47V4ncz8lxvlqxqlsbqU8PugB6f9YmkWP1IBp-HqifmaBnQufJA>