

Dawn

By Ella Higginson

The soft-toned clock upon the stair chimed three—
Too sweet for sleep, too early yet to rise.
In restful peace I lay with half-closed eyes,
Watching the tender hours go dreamily;
The tide was flowing in; I heard the sea
Shivering along the sands; while yet the skies
Were dim, uncertain, as the light that lies
Beneath the fretwork of some wild-rose tree
Within the thicket gray. The chanticler
Sent drowsy calls across the slumbrous air;
In solemn silence sweet it was to hear
My own heart beat . . . Then broad and deep and fair—
Trembling in its new birth from heaven's womb—
One crimson shaft of dawn sank thro' my room.

Source: *She Wields a Pen: American Women Poets of the Nineteenth Century* (University of Iowa Press, 1997)



Poet and writer Ella Rhoads Higginson was born in Council Grove, Kansas. Her family relocated to Oregon early in Higginson's childhood, and she grew up in Portland and Oregon City, attending public school while receiving tutoring from renowned educator S.D. Pope. In 1885 she married Russell C. Higginson. The couple settled in Bellingham, Washington, where they opened a drugstore. During this period Higginson began to publish her poetry and stories in national journals. Higginson played an active role in promoting arts, education, and women's rights in Bellingham. She helped found the city's first library and was an honorary member of the Progressive Literary and Fraternal Club, the Bellingham Sorooptimists, and the Washington State Federation of Women's Clubs. Higginson served as campaign manager for Frances C. Axtell, the first woman elected to Washington State's House of Representatives.

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