Mother of Exiles

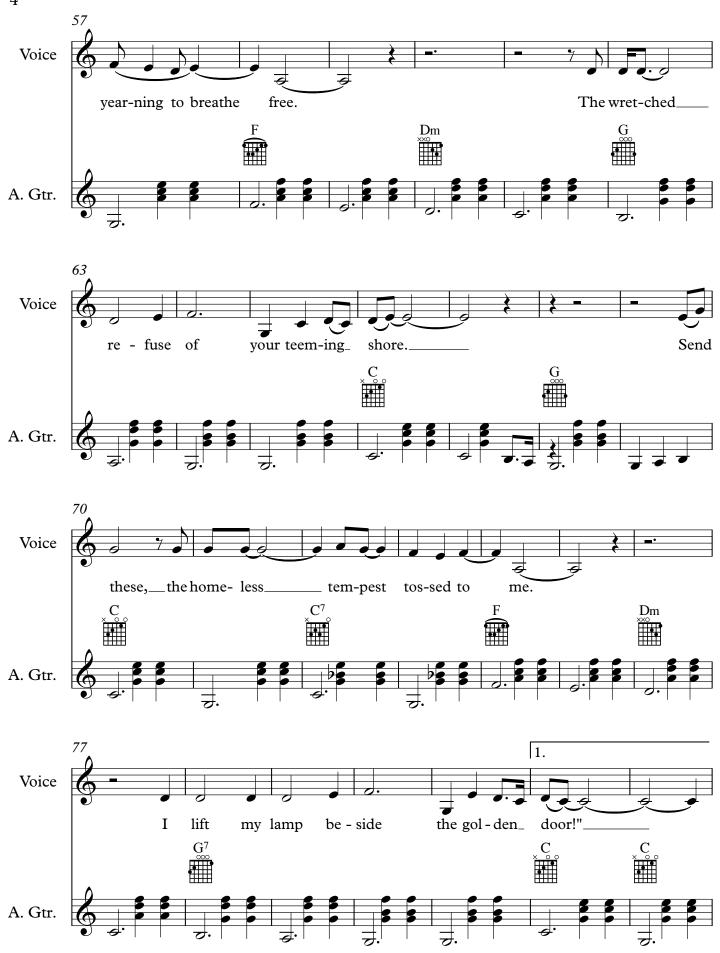
The New Colossus

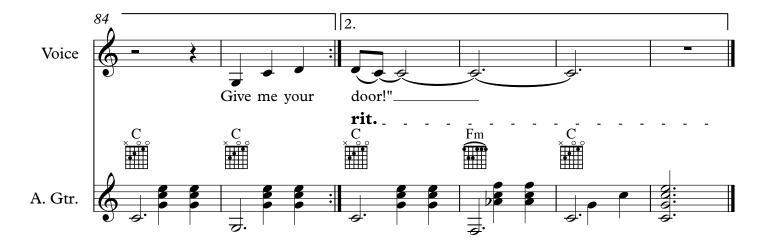
Emma Lazarus Gareth Loy











The New Colossus, a sonnet written by Emma Lazarus in 1883, is engraved on a bronze plaque inside the Statue of Liberty. The title of her poem and the first two lines refer to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, sometimes described as standing astride the entrance to its harbor. Not like the "conquering" statue of Rhodes, Lazarus' Statue of Liberty is seen as welcoming.

Lazrus' poem envisioning the Statue of Liberty as the greeter of immigrants catalized the statue's purpose, turning her into "a welcoming mother, a symbol of hope to the outcasts and downtrodden of the world."

I have set Lazarus' poem to music to remind us of America's centuries-long heritage of inclusion and openness to immigrants. After all, every one of us is an immigrant or a child of immigrants. Immigrants and their children are what made America great in the first place. Our generosity of spirit and good will to mankind is what continues to make America great.

Gareth Loy 2/16/2017