

WHAT THE RIGHT TO VOTE MEANS TO ME



A Woman's Right to Vote (a crowd-sourced poem)

On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, giving American women the right to vote.

I honor her, my grandmother,
who had not been granted the right to vote,

who had few rights at all.
I hear the whispers of my grandmother

and her sisters. They had something to say,
and I hear them still. *Our lives will be counted,*

they insisted. *One day.* I honor my grandmother's timid voice
turned forceful so we could mark our ballots.

With great courage and zeal, our an-sisters
climbed from the depths claiming the opportunity,

the right to be counted, to be represented,
to be heard. To make choices—

who's fit to govern, who's fit to lose.
I thank these women and vote in their name.

I see their legacy in a white-haired woman
slowly descending from the bus, clutching her purse,

leading with her cane, making her way across the street,
down the long path to the Seventh District polling center.

That woman will be counted. It's been a long road,
the fight for the right to vote. And equality?

We're not there yet. A simple thing: the vote.
An expression of freedom, of power.

A woman's vote means Responsibility. Opportunity.
Sisterhood. I am a woman. I cherish the right to vote,

and I cast my vote to be counted.
One truth, freely shared.

Why did it take so long? What did men fear?
Does voting make women too powerful?

Some say suffrage is a privilege.
I say it's a right. It's a way to contribute.

I will be seen, heard, and counted.
On election day, I am equal: my vote

is counted like every other one,
not discarded or dismissed

just because I'm a woman.
No man's ego above me.

Reflect, select, decide...I choose, open-eyed,
and my voice will be heard.

With the vote comes acknowledgement, finally.
Responsibility to my conscience.

Responsibility to the future.
A chance for change. The fight is not over.

I will feel more at peace when women
have an equal voice in the halls of government.

We must join together, hand in hand,
partners in democracy. Hope amidst the chaos.