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Bread and Roses

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## VERSE IN PLACE

JAMES OPPENHEIM

### Bread and Roses

As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day,  
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,  
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,  
For the people hear us singing: “Bread and roses! Bread and roses!”

As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men,  
For they are women’s children, and we mother them again.  
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;  
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead  
Go crying through our singing their ancient call for bread.  
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.  
Yes, it is bread we fight for — but we fight for roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days.  
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.  
No more the drudge and idler — ten that toil where one reposes,  
But a sharing of life’s glories: Bread and roses! Bread and roses!

(1911)

#### EDITOR’S NOTE

James Oppenheim (1882–1932) was an American novelist and poet. His poetry collections include *Songs for a New Age* (1914) and *The Sea* (1924). Oppenheim wrote the poem “Bread and Roses” in support of the women’s rights movement, inspired by a speech by suffragist leader Helen Todd (“bread for all, and roses too!”). The poem became emblematic of the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile mill strike of 1912. Striking women mill workers carried signs quoting the poem, and it was recited at many labor rallies. “Bread and Roses” was put to music by Mimi Fariña in 1974 and recorded by Judy Collins, Ani DiFranco, and others. The international feminist organization *Pan y Rosas* borrows its name from Todd’s speech and Oppenheim’s poem.



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#### On the cover of this issue

Climate change creates conditions conducive to larger, more frequent fires, particularly in the American West. As a result, historic structures and artifacts are at greater risk of fire damage. The Bent's Fort Fire started on the morning of April 12, 2022. Approximately 85% of the national historic site's 800 acres burned. Thanks to the efforts of fire crews, the reconstructed adobe fort was undamaged. | [NATIONAL PARK SERVICE](#)