



## Reinventing the Peabody Sisters

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Whether in the public realm as political activists, artists, teachers, biographers, editors, and writers or in the more traditional role of domestic, nurturing women, Elizabeth Peabody, Mary Peabody Mann, and Sophia Peabody Hawthorne subverted rigid nineteenth-century definitions of women's limited realm of influence. •Reinventing the Peabody Sisters seeks to redefine this dynamic trio's relationship to the literary and political movements of the mid nineteenth century. Previous scholarship has romanticized, vilified, or altogether erased their influences and literary productions or viewed these individuals solely in light of their relationships to other nineteenth-century luminaries, particularly men---Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Horace Mann. This collection underscores that each woman was a creative force in her own right. Despite their differences and sibling conflicts, all three sisters thrived in the rarefied---if economically modest---atmosphere of a childhood household that glorified intellectual and artistic pursuits. This background allowed each woman to negotiate the nineteenth-century literary marketplace and in the process redefine its scope. Elizabeth, Mary, and Sophia remained linked throughout their lives, encouraging, complementing, and sometimes challenging each other's endeavors while also contributing to each other's literary work. The essays in this collection examine the sisters' confrontations with and involvement in the intellectual movements and social conflicts of the nineteenth century, including Transcendentalism, the Civil War, the role of women, international issues, slavery, Native American rights, and parenting. Among the most revealing writings that the sisters left behind, however, are those which explore the interlaced relationship that continued throughout their remarkable lives.

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