

Phillis Wheatley Peters

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Table of Contents

"To the University of Cambridge, in New-England"	3
"To S. M. a young African Painter, on seeing his Works".....	7
"On the Death of the Rev. MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD"	10
"To Maecenas"	14
"On the Death of J. C. an Infant".....	18
"An HYMN to the EVENING".....	20
Phillis Wheatley.....	21
"To the KING's Most Excellent Majesty".....	23
"NIOBE in Distress for her Children slain by APOLLO, from Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book VI. and from a view of the Painting of Mr. Richard Wilson"	25
"Upon Being Brought from Africa to America".....	33
"On IMAGINATION"	35
Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral	37

"To the University of Cambridge, in New-England"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 15 -

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,^{university} IN NEW-ENGLAND.

1 WHILE an intrinsic ardor,^{ardor} prompts to write,
2 The muses,^{muses} promise to assist my pen;
3 'Twas not long since I left my native shore
4 The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom,^{gloom}:
5 Father of mercy, 'twas thy gracious hand
6 Brought me in safety from those dark abodes.

Students, to you 'tis giv'n to scan the heights
7 Above, to traverse the ethereal space,
8 And mark the systems of revolving worlds,^{systems}.
9 Still more, ye sons of science ye receive
10 The blissful news by messengers from heav'n,
11 How *Jesus* ' blood for your redemption flows.
12 See him with hands out-stretcht upon the cross;
13 Immese compassion in his bosom glows;
14 He hears revilers, nor resents their scorn:
15 What matchless mercy in the Son of God!
16 When the whole human race by sin had fall'n,

- 16 -

17 He deign'd,^{deign} to die that they might rise again,
18 And share with him in the sublimest skies,
19 Life without death, and glory without end.

20 Improve your privileges while they stay,
21 Ye pupils, and each hour redeem, that bears
22 Or good or bad report of you to heav'n.

23 Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul,
24 By you be shunn'd, nor once remit your guard;
25 Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg.
26 Ye blooming plants of human race divine,
27 An *Ethiop* , ^{Ethiop} tells you 'tis your greatest foe;
28 Its transient sweetness turns to endless pain,
29 And in immense perdition, ^{perdition} sinks the soul.

- 17 -

Footnotes

- university After describing her own educational journey, Wheatley advises students at the University of Cambridge in New England to appreciate and "[i]mprove" (21) the privilege of their education by "shunn[ing]" (25) the "transient sweetness" (29) of sin using a variety of religious images. The University of Cambridge in New England is now known as [Harvard University](#). According to [Katherine Clay Bassard](#), Wheatley wrote this poem when she was about fourteen years old (41). The engraving included here is by Paul Revere and shows "A Westerly View of The Colledges in Cambridge New England" (1767), [via Wikimedia Commons](#).
- [JW]
- ardor Wheatley works from the premise, commonly used among early women writers and the enslaved who were restricted from intellectual pursuits like writing, that her desire to write is "intrinsic" (1) or God-given, and therefore appropriate. The word "ardor" also connotes physical desire and flame-like passion, according to the OED (n.3).
- [JW]
- muses According to [A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology](#), the Muses are "inspiring goddesses of song" who "presid[e] over the different kinds of poetry, and over the arts and sciences." The "invocation of the muse" to aid the poet's work is often used by neoclassical authors like those whom Wheatley has clearly read and was influenced by, including [Milton](#) and [Pope](#). However, Hilene Flanzbaum suggests that Wheatley's notably frequent invocation of the muse is more significant than formulaic or imitative--it is "the very means by which she usurps power for herself and claims a berth for her own thoughts, emotions and desires. And while some may claim that these functions accompany any appearance of the muse, when the muses bestow their power on a black female slave, they transport Wheatley to a domain surprisingly free of restriction and previously forbidden" ("[Unprecedented Liberties](#)" 75).
- [JW]
- gloom Wheatley here alludes to [Exodus 10:21-22](#), wherein the ninth plague of darkness is visited upon Egypt. This reference is also in line with contemporary Orientalist notions about Egypt and Egyptian religiosity, which was believed to be full of occult practices. Early nineteenth-century British historian and scholar Thomas Maurice explores these ideas of idolatry and superstition in [Observations on the Remains of Ancient Egyptian Grandeur and Superstition](#). A detailed focus on the Egyptian religious practices can be found in the chapter "Strictures on the superstitious rites of the Egyptians, particularly on the Nefarious Worship paid to Beasts, Esteemed Sacred, and called in Scripture the Abominations of Egypt" (74-83). The Book of Exodus also describes the Israelites' delivery from enslavement in Egypt.
- [JW]
- systems The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century development of the microscope and the telescope had made great scientific advancements possible, especially in astronomy; in the title page and pull-out image represented here, you can see an eighteenth-century orrery--a scientific clockwork instrument used to dramatize the motion of the planets in the solar system (via the University of Otago). Possibly an allusion to Alexander Pope's 1733-34 [Essay on Man](#) (I.23-28), Wheatley here may also be referencing contemporary scientific thought about the [plurality of worlds](#).

- [JW]

deign According to the Oxford English Dictionary [deign](#) means "to think it worthy of oneself" or "to think fit" (n.1a). Today, it typically has a negative connotation, though it does not here.

- [JW]

Ethiop According to the OED, the word [Ethiop](#) would have been used during Wheatley's time most often to refer to "[a] black or dark-skinned person; a black African," and only occasionally to the country of Ethiopia, specifically (n.A). Included here, [via the Norwich Collection at Stanford University](#), is a 1666 map of Africa and the surrounding oceans, embellished with a variety of images.

- [JW]

perdition In theological discussion, the word [perdition](#) means "the state of final spiritual ruin or damnation; the consignment of the unredeemed or wicked and impenitent soul to hell; the fate of those in hell; eternal death" (OED, "perdition" n.2a). In more general terms, it suggests ruin or degradation (n.1a).

- [JW]

"To S. M. a young African Painter, on seeing his Works"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 114 -

To S. M.,SM a young *African* Painter, on seeing his Works.

1 TO show the lab'ring bosom's deep intent,
2 And thought in living characters to paint,
3 When first thy pencil did those beauties give,
4 And breathing figures learnt from thee to live,
5 How did those prospects give my soul delight,
6 A new creation rushing on my sight?
7 Still, wond'rous youth! each noble path pursue,
8 On deathless glories fix thine ardent view:
9 Still may the painter's and the poet's fire
10 To aid thy pencil, and thy verse conspire!
11 And may the charms of each seraphic theme
12 Conduct thy footsteps to immortal fame!
13 High to the blissful wonders of the skies
14 Elate thy soul, and raise thy wishful eyes.
15 Thrice happy, when exalted to survey
16 That splendid city,^{city}, crown'd with endless day,
17 Whose twice six gates on radiant hinges ring:
18 Celestial *Salem* blooms in endless spring.

- 115 -

19 Calm and serene thy moments glide along,
20 And may the muse inspire each future song!
21 Still, with the sweets of contemplation bless'd,
22 May peace with balmy wings your soul invest!
23 But when these shades of time are chas'd away,
24 And darkness ends in everlasting day,
25 On what seraphic pinions shall we move,

26 And view the landscapes in the realms above?
27 There shall thy tongue in heav'nly murmurs flow,
28 And there my muse with heav'nly transport glow:
29 No more to tell of *Damon's* tender sighs, ^{Damon},
30 Or rising radiance of *Aurora's* eyes, ^{Aurora},
31 For nobler themes demand a nobler strain,
32 And purer language on th' ethereal plain.
33 Cease, gentle muse! the solemn gloom of night
34 Now seals the fair creation from my sight.

Footnotes

- SM According to *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* , Scipio Moorhead was an enslaved artist, principally known for his painting of Phillis Wheatley, which became the basis for the frontispiece to her 1773 collection of poems. The frontispiece is included in this database. While no signed paintings by Moorhead survive, this poem by Wheatley may describe two of his works. Moorhead was owned by the Presbyterian minister John Moorhead of Boston and was likely tutored by Sarah Moorhead ([Appiah and Gates 62](#)).
- [TH]
- city Wheatley refers to the heavenly city of "New Jerusalem," described in Revelation 21. As many scholars have noted, Christianity offered a not uncomplicated narrative of salvation and hope that was particularly resonant for the enslaved. She continues this metaphor of future bliss crowning current woe throughout this and other poems; see, for instance, lines 23-28, below.
- [TH]
- Damon Damon is a typical name for a male lover in pastoral poetry, poetry that imagines romantic conflicts in bucolic or country settings. Wheatley frequently both references and draws on classical pastoral poetry throughout her *Poems* . For a deeper reading of Wheatley's use of the pastoral, see [John C. Shield's scholarly essay, "Phillis Wheatley's Subversive Pastoral."](#)
- [TH]
- Aurora In Greco-Roman mythology, Aurora (called Eos in the Greek) personifies the dawn.
- [TH]

"On the Death of the Rev. MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 22 -

On the Death of the Rev. MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD., ^{Whitfield}

1770.

1 HAIL, happy saint, on thine immortal throne,
2 Possesst of glory, life, and bliss unknown;
3 We hear no more the music of thy tongue,
4 Thy wonted auditories, ^{wonted} cease to throng.
5 Thy sermons in unequall'd accents, ^{unequalled} flow'd,
6 And ev'ry bosom with devotion glow'd;
7 Thou didst in strains of eloquence refin'd
8 Inflame the heart, and captivate the mind.
9 Unhappy we the setting sun deplore,
10 So glorious once, but ah! it shines no more.

11 Behold the prophet in his tow'ring flight!
12 He leaves the earth for heav'n's unmeasur'd height,
13 And worlds unknown receive him from our sight.
14 There *Whitefield* wings with rapid course his way,
15 And sails to Zion , ^{Zion} through vast seas of day.
16 Thy pray'rs, great saint, and thine incessant cries
17 Have pierc'd the bosom of thy native skies.

- 23 -

18 Thou moon hast seen, and all the stars of light,
19 How he has wrestled with his God by night.
20 He pray'd that grace in ev'ry heart might dwell,
21 He long'd to see *America* excel;
22 He charg'd its youth that ev'ry grace divine

23 Should with full lustre in their conduct shine;
24 That Saviour, which his soul did first receive,
25 The greatest gift that ev'n a God can give,
26 He freely offer'd to the num'rous throng,
27 That on his lips with list'ning pleasure hung.

28 "Take him, ye wretched, for your only good,
29 "Take him ye starving sinners, for your food;
30 "Ye thirsty, come to this life-giving stream,
31 "Ye preachers, take him for your joyful theme;
32 "Take him my dear *Americans* , he said,
33 "Be your complaints on his kind bosom laid:
34 "Take him, ye *Africans* , he longs for you,
35 "*Impartial Saviour* is his title due:
36 "Wash'd in the fountain of redeeming blood,
37 "You shall be sons, and kings, and priests to God."

- 24 -

38 Great *Countess* , ^{countess} , we *Americans* revere
39 Thy name, and mingle in thy grief sincere;
40 *New England* deeply feels, the *Orphans* , ^{orphans} mourn,
41 Their more than father will no more return.

42 But, though arrested by the hand of death,
43 *Whitefield* no more exerts his lab'ring breath,
44 Yet let us view him in th' eternal skies,
45 Let ev'ry heart to this bright vision rise;
46 While the tomb safe retains its sacred trust,
47 Till life divine re-animates his dust.

Footnotes

Whitfield George Whitefield (1714-1770; pronounced "wit-field") was one of the most famous people of the eighteenth-century Anglophone world. As a student at Oxford in the early 1730s, he got to know John and Charles Wesley, the founders of the Methodist movement in the church of England. Whitefield joined them in attempting to "methodize" the faith, returning it to the simple principles of the early church. But more than the Wesley brothers, Whitefield made this reformist movement into a public ministry. A famously charismatic public speaker, Whitefield preached to crowds numbering in the thousands in England and the American colonies, becoming a central figure in what was known as the "Great Awakening," a revival of evangelical Protestantism that was influential on both sides of the Atlantic. Benjamin Franklin and Olaudah Equiano were each impressed (though in very different ways) when they saw Whitefield preach in Philadelphia and Savannah, respectively. Whitefield made several visits to the Boston area, and it seems likely that the Wheatleys saw him preach there. Phillis might very well have joined them, but we cannot be sure. Whitefield died unexpectedly in Newburyport, Massachusetts on September 30, 1770, a few days after he left Boston on what turned out to be his last tour of the colonies.

Phillis Wheatley's elegy for Whitefield changed her life, transforming her from a young enslaved woman with a small readership among friends of the Wheatley family to an author with an international readership. The poem was published as a broadside on October 11, 1770, and was an immediate success. It was reprinted several times in colonial cities, as well as London, and also appeared in several newspapers. The poem brought Wheatley to the attention of Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, who is addressed in the poem itself. A fervent Methodist herself, the Countess was Whitefield's patron, supporting him on his evangelical missions. The Countess became Wheatley's patron as well, sponsoring the publication of her only volume of poems, published in London in 1773.

[George Whitefield by an unknown artist, about 1770, National Portrait Gallery, London]

- [JOB]

wonted wonted: "Accustomed, customary, usual." Oxford English Dictionary; auditory: "An assembly of hearers, an audience." Oxford English Dictionary, hence the meaning here is something like "usual audience."

- [JOB]

unequall'd unequalled accents"; Whitefield was a famously eloquent and compelling public speaker; the sense here is that no other speaker could match the "accent" or style of his voice.

- [JOB]

Zion Zion is a name in the Hebrew bible for Jerusalem, and the term has often been extended to mean the entirety of what believers think of as the holy land, or even the afterlife.

- [JOB]

countess The Countess of *Huntingdon*, to whom Mr. *Whitefield* was Chaplain. [Wheatley's note]. Selina Hastings, the countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), was a major figure in the Methodist

movement, using her wealth to support the founding of chapels and a training school for ministers. Whitefield became her personal chaplain in the 1740s. Wheatley sought and received her patronage as well, and Wheatley's 1773 volume of poems was published with her support.

[Selina Hastings by an unknown artist, about 1770, National Portrait Gallery, London]

- [JOB]

orphans Whitefield first came to the American colonies in 1738, when he travelled to Savannah, Georgia, where the colony's trustees had hired him to serve as minister. He decided to make his main project in Savannah the establishment of an orphanage, and he returned to England after only four months to raise money for the project. The Bethesda Orphan House was founded in 1740, and Whitefield continued to raise money and to return for visits to the institution throughout his lifetime.

- [JOB]

"To Maecenas"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 9 -

TO MAECENAS.

1 MAECENAS, ^{Maecenas}, you, beneath the myrtle shade,
2 Read o'er what poets sung, and shepherds play'd.
3 What felt those poets but you feel the same?
4 Does not your soul possess the sacred flame?
5 Their noble strains your equal genius shares
6 In softer language, and diviner airs.

7 While Homer , ^{Homer} paints, lo! circumfus'd in air,
8 Celestial Gods in mortal forms appear;

- 10 -

9 Swift as they move hear each recess rebound,
10 Heav'n quakes, earth trembles, and the shores resound.
11 Great Sire of verse, before my mortal eyes,
12 The lightnings blaze across the vaulted skies,
13 And, as the thunder shakes the heav'nly plains,
14 A deep-felt horror thrills through all my veins.
15 When gentler strains demand thy graceful song,
16 The length'ning line moves languishing along.
17 When great Patroclus courts Achilles' aid, ^{Patroclus},
18 The grateful tribute of my tears is paid;
19 Prone on the shore he feels the pangs of love,
20 And stern Pelides , ^{Pelides} tend'rest passions move.

21 Great Maro's strain, ^{Maro} in heav'nly numbers flows,
22 The Nine inspire, ^{nine}, and all the bosom glows.
23 O could I rival thine and Virgil 's page,
24 Or claim the Muses with the Mantuan Sage, ^{Mantua};

25 Soon the same beauties should my mind adorn,
26 And the same ardors in my soul should burn:
27 Then should my song in bolder notes arise,
28 And all my numbers pleasingly surprize;

- 11 -

29 But here I sit, and mourn a grov'ling mind,
30 That fain, ^{fain} would mount, and ride upon the wind.

31 Not you, my friend, these plaintive strains become,
32 Not you, whose bosom is the *Muses* home;
33 When they from tow'ring *Helicon* , ^{Helicon} retire,
34 They fan in you the bright immortal fire,
35 But I less happy, cannot raise the song,
36 The fault'ring, ^{faltering} music dies upon my tongue.

37 The happier *Terence* , ^{Terence*}, ^{auth1} all the choir inspir'd,
38 His soul replenish'd, and his bosom fir'd;
39 But say, ye *Muses* , why this partial grace,
40 To one alone of *Afric* 's sable race;
41 From age to age transmitting thus his name
42 With the first glory in the rolls of fame?

43 Thy virtues, great *Maecenas!* shall be sung
44 In praise of him, from whom those virtues sprung:

- 12 -

45 While blooming wreaths around thy temples spread,
46 I'll snatch a laurel, ^{laurel} from thine honour'd head,
47 While you indulgent smile upon the deed.

48 As long as *Thames* , ^{Thames} in streams majestic flows,
49 Or *Naiads* , ^{Naiads} in their oozy beds repose
50 While *Phoebus* , ^{Apollo} reigns above the starry train,
51 While bright *Aurora* , ^{Aurora} purples o'er the main,
52 So long, great Sir, the muse thy praise shall sing,
53 So long thy praise shall make *Parnassus* , ^{Parnassus} ring:
54 Then grant, *Maecenas* , thy paternal rays,
55 Hear me propitious, and defend my lays.

Footnotes

MaecenasMaecenas was the wealthy patron of classical Roman poets Virgil and Horace, whom Wheatley draws on in complex ways. Wheatley's poem "To Maecenas" opens her collection, which position gives it a powerful significance as she claims the right to speak within this tradition. Like [Horace's Odes to Maecenas](#), Wheatley's offers praise to her patron, but does so in ways that are fraught with the equivocalities of being an enslaved African working within the language and culture of the colonial master. For a deeper reading of "To Maecenas," see Paula Bennett's journal article, "Phillis Wheatley's Vocation and the Paradox of the 'Afric Muse.'" Following other scholars, Bennett identifies Wheatley's poet-patron as Mather Byles, one of the signatories verifying her authorship. The image included here shows the attestation to the public, included in the 1773 edition of Wheatley's poems, certifying that they were indeed written by "PHILLIS, a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since, brought an uncultivated Barbarian from *Africa* ,...and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in [Boston]."

- [TH]

Homer Homer is the ancient Greek poet of *The Oddysey* and *The Illiad* .

- [TH]

PatroclusAchilles is the main character of *The Illiad* , which tells the story of the Trojan War and, specifically, Achilles' wrath. Achilles and Patroclus are lovers and friends; angered by Agammemnon, Achilles refuses to fight, but allows Patroclus to wear his armor and lead the Myrmidons against the Trojans. When Patroclus is killed by Hector, Achilles is grief-stricken and, enraged, he returns to battle to destroy the Trojans. The image included here, Gavin Hamilton's *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus* (1760-1763), is housed in [National Galleries, Scotland](#).

- [TH]

Pelides Pelides is Achilles' father; therefore, it is also another way of referring to Achilles himself. Achilles is frequently described as "stern" by Homer.

- [TH]

Maro Publius Vergilius Maro, more commonly known as Virgil, the Augustan Roman poet famed for his Eclogues and the epic poem *The Aeneid* .

- [TH]

nine The nine muses in Greco-Roman mythology are goddesses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne who inspire those in the arts and sciences.

- [TH]

Mantua Mantua is a city in Italy, and the home of Virgil; the Mantuan sage is the poet Virgil.

- [TH]

- fain Meaning "[g]ladly, willingly, with pleasure," according to the OED (fain, adv.B).
- [TH]
- Helicon Mount Helicon in Greece is a mountain believed to be the home of the muses and hence a place sacred to poetry.
- [TH]
- faltering An alternate spelling and contraction, for meter, of "faltering," meaning unsteady or staggering.
- [TH]
- Terence Publius Terentius Afer, better known as Terence, is a famous Roman comic playwright, born in northern Africa. As the *Encyclopedia Britannica* notes, Terence was enslaved and later freed by a Roman senator. Wheatley suggests a connection between herself and Terence, both of African origin; yet, Terence is "happier"--both in his poetic skill, and perhaps also in having been freed.
- [TH]
- auth1 An *African* by birth. [Wheatley's note.]
- laurel The leaves of the bay laurel tree were a conventional symbol of poetic fame and achievement originating in the mythological tale of [Daphne and Apollo](#). The image included here is a portrait of the 18th century poet Alexander Pope, wearing a crown of laurel. The portrait (c.1737), by Jonathan Richardson, is housed in the [National Portrait Gallery, London](#).
- [TH]
- Thames The Thames is a major river flowing through southern England and London.
- [TH]
- Naiads />In Greco-Roman mythology, naiads are female freshwater nymphs. The image included here, by Jean-Francois de Troy, shows part of the Ovidian story of Pan and Syrinx (1722-1724). De Troy's *Pan and Syrinx* is housed in the [Getty Museum](#).
- [TH]
- Apollo Phoebus Apollo is an important god in the Greco-Roman tradition. He is associated with both the sun and with music and poetry.
- [TH]
- Aurora In Greco-Roman mythology, Aurora (called Eos in the Greek) personifies the dawn.
- [TH]
- Parnassus Parnassus is a mountain in Greece that was seen as the home of the gods, particularly Dionysus and Apollo, as well as the Muses. The Muses are also associated with Mount Helicon.
- [TH]

"On the Death of J. C. an Infant"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 92 -

On the Death of J. C. an Infant.

1 NO more the flow'ry scenes of pleasure rise,
2 Nor charming prospects greet the mental eyes,
3 No more with joy we view that lovely face
4 Smiling, disportive, flush'd with ev'ry grace.

5 The tear of sorrow flows from ev'ry eye,
6 Groans answer groans, and sighs to sighs reply;
7 What sudden pangs shot thro' each aching heart,
8 When, *Death* , thy messenger dispatch'd his dart?
9 Thy dread attendants, all-destroying *Pow'r* ,
10 Hurried the infant to his mortal hour.
11 Could'st thou unpitying close those radiant eyes?
12 Or fail'd his artless beauties to surprize?
13 Could not his innocence thy stroke controul,
14 Thy purpose shake, and soften all thy soul?

- 93 -

15 The blooming babe, with shades of *Death* o'erspread,
16 No more shall smile, no more shall raise its head,
17 But, like a branch that from the tree is torn,
18 Falls prostrate, wither'd, languid, and forlorn.
19 "Where flies my *James* ?" 'tis thus I seem to hear
20 The parent ask, "Some angel tell me where
21 "He wings his passage thro' the yielding air?"
22 Methinks a cherub bending from the skies
23 Observes the question, and serene replies,
24 "In heav'ns high palaces your babe appears:
25 "Prepare to meet him, and dismiss your tears."
26 Shall not th' intelligence your grief restrain,

27 And turn the mournful to the chearful strain?
28 Cease your complaints, suspend each rising sigh,
29 Cease to accuse the Ruler of the sky.
30 Parents, no more indulge the falling tear:
31 Let *Faith* to heav'n's refulgent domes repair,
32 There see your infant, like a seraph glow:
33 What charms celestial in his numbers flow

- 94 -

34 Melodious, while the soul-enchancing strain
35 Dwells on his tongue, and fills th' ethereal plain?
36 Enough -- for ever cease your murm'ring breath;
37 Not as a foe, but friend converse with *Death* ,
38 Since to the port of happiness unknown
39 He brought that treasure which you call your own.
40 The gift of heav'n intrusted to your hand
41 Chearful resign at the divine command:
42 Not at your bar must sov'reign *Wisdom* stand.

"An HYMN to the EVENING"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 58 -

An HYMN to the EVENING.

1 SOON as the sun forsook the eastern main
2 The pealing thunder shook the heav'nly plain;
3 Majestic grandeur! From the zephyr's wing,
4 Exhales the incense of the blooming spring.
5 Soft purl the streams, the birds renew their notes,
6 And through the air their mingled music floats.

7 Through all the heav'ns what beauteous dies are spread!
8 But the west glories in the deepest red:
9 So may our breasts with ev'ry virtue glow,
10 The living temples of our God below!

11 Fill'd with the praise of him who gives the light,
12 And draws the sable curtains of the night,

- 59 -

13 Let placid slumbers sooth each weary mind,
14 At morn to wake more heav'nly, more refin'd,
15 So shall the labours of the day begin
16 More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.

17 Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes,
18 Then cease, my song, till fair *Aurora* rise.

Phillis Wheatley

By John O'Brien

Phillis Wheatley (c. 1753-1781) became the first African-American woman to publish a volume of her own poetry when her book *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* was published in Boston in 1773. She was born in west Africa and was kidnapped by slave traders and brought by ship to Boston in 1761; she was believed to be seven or eight years old, but we know almost nothing else about her childhood in Africa or her family there. The slave ship that carried her was called the *Phillis*, and she was given that name when she was purchased by the Wheatleys, a well-off and prominent Boston family. John Wheatley was originally a tailor who branched out into a substantial business in wholesaling, shipping, and money-lending; his wife Susanna became an active supporter of Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries who came from England to preach in the colonies. When they purchased Phillis, the Wheatleys had eighteen-year-old twins, Nathaniel and Mary, and several other enslaved men and women working in their household.

The Wheatleys seem quickly to have recognized Phillis's precocious talents with language, and taught her to read English, almost certainly starting with the King James translation of the Bible. Before long, however, she was reading the works of English poets like Alexander Pope and John Milton, as well as English translations of classical poets like Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. John Wheatley testified that within sixteen months of her arrival, Phillis was able to read even the most difficult parts of the Bible, which is extraordinary for any nine-year-old and pretty much unprecedented for enslaved African-Americans in the eighteenth century, most of whom were never taught to read by their masters. White Americans generally feared teaching the people they claimed ownership over how to read and write lest they use those tools to work against the system that kept them in bondage, and in many places it was illegal to teach enslaved people to read. Phillis began publishing poems in New England newspapers at the age of fourteen, and continued to publish occasional poetry (that is, poems on particular current occasions or events) in newspapers over the next several years. She wrote poems of consolation addressed to people who had lost loved ones, but also poems addressing public events like the Boston Massacre in 1773.

Wheatley had a breakthrough of sorts when she published her elegaic poem "On Death of George Whitefield" in pamphlet form in October 1770. Whitefield, the most famous preacher of the day, had preached several times in August 1770 at the Old South Church in Boston (Wheatley may have heard him then; the Wheatley family certainly knew him personally), but died unexpectedly the next month in Newburyport, Massachusetts, about 35 miles north of Boston, and was buried there. Wheatley's poem on Whitefield was widely sold in New England, and then republished in London to great acclaim. The Wheatleys sought subscribers for a volume of her poetry to be published in Boston, but they do not seem to have attracted enough of them to make the venture financially viable (why they did not subsidize it themselves is unknown; they certainly could have afforded to). They turned to Archibald Bell, a London publisher of religious texts, who was able to gain the patronage of Selina, the Countess of Huntington. She had been George Whitefield's patron and was a prominent supporter of Methodist causes in England. The Countess helped subsidize the publication of Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and*

Moral in 1773, which Wheatley in turn dedicated to her. Phillis Wheatley went to London (accompanied by Nathaniel Wheatley and traveling on the Wheatleys' own ship) to supervise the printing and publication of her book, and was treated as a celebrity, meeting aristocrats and prominent public figures (including Benjamin Franklin, then resident in London officially as an advocate for the colony of Pennsylvania, but serving in general as a voice for the cause of the American colonists), and being given tours of the Tower of London and the British Museum. She returned to Boston just before the book was published. Susanna was ill (she died in early 1774), and Nathaniel may have prevailed upon Phillis to return to help take care of her. But, as Vincent Carretta has suggested, Phillis may also have made a deal here, exchanging her willingness to return to Boston for the guarantee of her freedom. In any case, she was released from enslavement in October 1773, and although she stayed a part of the Wheatley household until the death of John Wheatley in 1778, she was now a free woman.

After John Wheatley's death, Phillis married John Peters, a free black man who was a grocer in Boston. She solicited subscriptions for a second volume of poetry, but with little success, and although some of the poems that would have gone into the volume were later published in newspapers, a lot of them were lost. John Peters had financial troubles and spent much time in jail for debt. He was in jail, in fact, when Phillis died of unknown causes in December 1784.

Readers immediately recognized the great skill with which Wheatley adapted contemporary English poetic forms, such as the heroic couplet and iambic pentameter blank verse, and classical models to topics such as her own enslavement and the situation of the American colonies. It is not surprising to discover that many contemporary critics had a hard time disentangling her identity as a teen-aged African-American enslaved girl from their evaluation of the quality and significance of her verse. Her publisher Archibald Bell insisted, it seems, that John Wheatley have prominent Bostonians testify that the poems were indeed by Phillis and not written by someone else, and he did so; the testimony appears at the beginning of the published *Poems*. Other critics enlisted her in the nascent abolitionist cause, using her obvious gifts as evidence for the equality of Africans with Europeans, and proof that slavery was immoral. As scholars in recent decades have studied and recovered her poems and letters, Phillis Wheatley's place as one of the most important and originary voices of American literature has become secure.

"To the KING's Most Excellent Majesty"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 17 -

To the KING's Most Excellent Majesty.

1768.

- 1 YOUR subjects hope, dread Sire --
- 2 The crown upon your brows may flourish long,
- 3 And that your arm may in your God be strong!
- 4 O may your sceptre num'rous nations sway,
- 5 And all with love and readiness obey!

- 6 But how shall we the *British* king reward!
- 7 Rule thou in peace, our father, and our lord!
- 8 Midst the remembrance of thy favours past,
- 9 The meanest peasants most admire the last.*^{auth1}
- 10 May *George* , belov'd by all the nations round,
- 11 Live with heav'ns choicest constant blessings crown'd!
- 12 Great God, direct, and guard him from on high
- 13 And from his head let ev'ry evil fly!
- 14 And may each clime with equal gladness see
- 15 A monarch's smile can set his subjects free!

Footnotes

auth1 The Repeal of the Stamp Act. [Wheatley's note.]

"NIOBE in Distress for her Children slain by APOLLO, from Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book VI. and from a view of the Painting of Mr. Richard Wilson"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 101 -

NIOBE in Distress for her Children slain by APOLLO, from *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Book VI. and from a view of the Painting of Mr. *Richard Wilson*.

1 APOLLO's wrath to man the dreadful spring
2 Of ills innum'rous, tuneful goddess, sing!
3 Thou who did'st first th' ideal pencil give,
4 And taught'st the painter in his works to live,
5 Inspire with glowing energy of thought,
6 What *Wilson* painted, and what *Ovid* wrote.
7 Muse! lend thy aid, nor let me sue in vain,
8 Tho' last and meanest of the rhyming train!
9 O guide my pen in lofty strains to show
10 The *Phrygian* queen, all beautiful in woe.

11 'Twas where *Maeonia* spreads her wide domain
12 *Niobe* dwelt, and held her potent reign:
13 See in her hand the regal sceptre shine,
14 The wealthy heir of *Tantalus* divine,

- 102 -

15 He most distinguish'd by *Dodonean Jove* ,
16 To approach the tables of the gods above:
17 Her grandsire *Atlas* , who with mighty pains
18 Th' ethereal axis on his neck sustains:
19 Her other gran sire on the throne on high

20 Rolls the loud-pealing thunder thro' the sky.
21 Her spouse, *Amphion* , who from *Jove* too springs,
22 Divinely taught to sweep the sounding strings.
23 Seven sprightly sons the royal bed adorn,
24 Seven daughters beauteous as the op'ning morn,
25 As when *Aurora* fills the ravish'd sight,
26 And decks the orient realms with rosy light
27 From their bright eyes the living splendors play,
28 Nor can beholders bear the flashing ray.
29 Wherever, *Niobe* , thou turn'st thine eyes,
30 New beauties kindle, and new joys arise!
31 But thou had'st far the happier mother prov'd,
32 If this fair offspring had been less belov'd:

- 103 -

33 What if their charms exceed *Aurora's* teint,
34 No words could tell them, and no pencil paint,
35 Thy love too vehement hastens to destroy
36 Each blooming maid, and each celestial boy.
37 Now *Manto* comes, endu'd with mighty skill,
38 The past to explore, the future to reveal.
39 Thro' *Thebes'* wide streets *Tiresia's* daughter came,
40 Divine *Latona's* mandate to proclaim:
41 The Theban maids to hear the orders ran,
42 When thus *Maeonia's* prophetess began:
43 "Go, *Thebans!* great *Latona's* will obey,
44 "And pious tribute at her altars pay:
45 "With rights divine, the goddess be implor'd,
46 "Nor be her sacred offspring unador'd."
47 Thus *Manto* spoke. The *Theban* maids obey,
48 And pious tribute to the goddess pay.
49 The rich perfumes ascend in waving spires,
50 And altars blaze with consecrated fires;
51 The fair assembly moves with graceful air,
52 And leaves of laurel bind the flowing hair.

- 104 -

53 *Niobe* comes with all her royal race,
54 With charms unnumber'd, and superior grace:
55 Her *Phrygian* garments of delightful hue,
56 Inwove with gold, refulgent to the view,
57 Beyond description beautiful she moves

58 Like heav'nly Venus, 'midst her smiles and loves:
59 She views around the supplicating train,
60 And shakes her graceful head with stern disdain,
61 Proudly she turns around her lofty eyes,
62 And thus reviles celestial deities:
63 "What madness drives the *Theban* ladies fair
64 "To give their incense to surrounding air?
65 "Say why this new sprung deity preferr'd?
66 "Why vainly fancy your petitions heard?
67 "Or say why *Coeus'* offspring is obey'd,
68 "While to my goddessship no tribute's paid?
69 "For me no altars blaze with living fires,
70 "No bullock bleeds, no frankincense transpires,
71 "Tho' *Cadmus'* palace, not unknown to fame,
72 "And *Phrygian* nations all revere my name.

- 105 -

73 "Where'er I turn my eyes vast wealth I find.
74 "Lo! here an empress with a goddess join'd.
75 "What, shall a *Titaness* be deify'd,
76 "To whom the spacious earth a couch deny'd?
77 "Nor heav'n, nor earth, nor sea receiv'd your queen,
78 "Till pitying *Delos* took the wand'rer in.
79 "Round me what a large progeny is spread!
80 "No frowns of fortune has my soul to dread.
81 "What if indignant she decrease my train
82 "More than *Latona's* number will remain?
83 "Then hence, ye *Theban* dames, hence haste away,
84 "Nor longer offrings to *Latona* pay?
85 "Regard the orders of *Amphion's* spouse,
86 "And take the leaves of laurel from your brows."
87 *Niobe* spoke. The *Theban* maids obey'd,
88 Their brows unbound, and left the rights unpaid.

89 The angry goddess heard, then silence broke
90 On *Cynthus'* summit, and indignant spoke;

- 106 -

91 "*Phoebus!* behold, thy mother in disgrace,
92 "Who to no goddess yields the prior place
93 "Except to *Juno's* self, who reigns above,
94 "The spouse and sister of the thund'ring *Jove* .
95 "*Niobe* , sprung from *Tantalus* , inspires
96 "Each *Theban* bosom with rebellious fires;
97 "No reason her imperious temper quells,
98 "But all her father in her tongue rebels;

99 "Wrap her own sons for her blaspheming breath,
100 "Apollo! wrap them in the shades of death."
101 *Latona* ceas'd, and ardent thus replies
102 The God, whose glory decks th' expanded skies.

103 "Cease thy complaints, mine be the task assign'd
104 "To punish pride, and scourge the rebel mind."
105 This *Phoebe* join'd. -- They wing their instant flight;
106 *Thebes* trembled as th' immortal pow'rs alight.

107 With clouds incompass'd glorious *Phoebus* stands;
108 The feather'd vengeance quiv'ring in his hands.

- 109 -

110 Near *Cadmus'* walls a plain extended lay,
111 Where *Thebes'* young princes pass'd in sport the day:
112 There the bold coursers bounded o'er the plains,
113 While their great masters held the golden reins.
114 *Ismenus* first the racing pastime led,
115 And rul'd the fury of his flying steed.
116 "Ah me," he sudden cries, with shrieking breath,
117 While in his breast he feels the shaft of death;
118 He drops the bridle on his courser's mane,
119 Before his eyes in shadows swims the plain,
120 He, the first-born of great *Amphion's* bed,
121 Was struck the first, first mingled with the dead.

122 Then didst thou, *Sipylos*, the language hear
123 Of fate portentous whistling in the air:
124 As when th' impending storm the sailor sees
125 He spreads his canvas to the fav'ring breeze,

- 108 -

126 So to thine horse thou gav'st the golden reins,
127 Gav'st him to rush impetuous o'er the plains:
128 But ah! a fatal shaft from *Phoebus'* hand
129 Smites through thy neck, and sinks thee on the sand.

130 Two other brothers were at *wrestling* found,
131 And in their pastime claspt each other round:
132 A shaft that instant from *Apollo's* hand
133 Transfixt them both, and stretcht them on the sand:
134 Together they their cruel fate bemoan'd,
135 Together languish'd, and together groan'd:
136 Together too th' unbodied spirits fled,
137 And sought the gloomy mansions of the dead.

138 *Alphenor* saw, and trembling at the view,
139 Beat his torn breast, that chang'd its snowy hue.
140 He flies to raise them in a kind embrace;
141 A brother's fondness triumphs in his face:
142 *Alphenor* fails in this fraternal deed,
143 A dart dispatch'd him (so the fates decreed:)

- 109 -

144 Soon as the arrow left the deadly wound,
145 His issuing entrails smoak'd upon the ground.

146 What woes on blooming *Damasichon* wait!
147 His sighs portend his near impending fate.
148 Just where the well-made leg begins to be,
149 And the soft sinews form the supple knee,
150 The youth sore wounded by the *Delian* god
151 Attempts t' extract the crime-avenging rod,
152 But, whilst he strives the will of fate t' avert,
153 Divine *Apollo* sends a second dart;
154 Swift thro' his throat the feather'd mischief flies,
155 Bereft of sense, he drops his head, and dies.

156 Young *Ilioneus* , the last, directs his pray'r,
157 And cries, "My life, ye gods celestial! spare."
158 *Apollo* heard, and pity touch'd his heart,
159 But ah! too late, for he had sent the dart:
160 Thou too, O *Ilioneus* , art doom'd to fall,
161 The fates refuse that arrow to recal.

- 110 -

162 On the swift wings of ever-flying *Fame*
163 To *Cadmus'* palace soon the tidings came:
164 *Niobe* heard, and with indignant eyes
165 She thus express'd her anger and surprize:
166 "Why is such privilege to them allow'd?
167 "Why thus insulted by the *Delian* god?
168 "Dwells there such mischief in the pow'rs above?
169 "Why sleeps the vengeance of immortal *Jove*? "
170 For now *Amphion* too, with grief oppress'd,
171 Had plung'd the deadly dagger in his breast.
172 *Niobe* now, less haughty than before,
173 With lofty head directs her steps no more.
174 She, who late told her pedigree divine,
175 And drove the *Thebans* from *Latona's* shrine,
176 How strangely chang'd! -- yet beautiful in woe,
177 She weeps, nor weeps unpity'd by the foe.

178 On each pale corse the wretched mother spread
179 Lay overwhelm'd with grief, and kiss'd her dead,
180 Then rais'd her arms, and thus, in accents slow,
181 "Be sated cruel *Goddess!* with my woe;

- 111 -

182 "If I've offended, let these streaming eyes,
183 "And let this sev'nfold funeral suffice:
184 "Ah! take this wretched life you deign'd to save,
185 "With them I too am carried to the grave.
186 "Rejoice triumphant, my victorious foe,
187 "But show the cause from whence your triumphs flow?
188 "Tho' I unhappy mourn these children slain,
189 "Yet greater numbers to my lot remain."
190 She ceas'd, the bow-string twang'd with awful sound,
200 Which struck with terror all th' assembly round,
201 Except the queen, who stood unmov'd alone,
202 By her distresses more presumptuous grown.
203 Near the pale corpses stood their sisters fair
204 In sable vestures and dishevell'd hair;
205 One, while she draws the fatal shaft away,
206 Faints, falls, and sickens at the light of day.
207 To sooth her mother, lo! another flies,
208 And blames the fury of inclement skies,
209 And, while her words a filial pity show,
210 Struck dumb -- indignant seeks the shades below.

- 112 -

211 Now from the fatal place another flies,
212 Falls in her flight, and languishes, and dies.
213 Another on her sister drops in death;
214 A fifth in trembling terrors yields her breath;
215 While the sixth seeks some gloomy cave in vain,
216 Struck with the rest, and mingl'd with the slain.

217 One only daughter lives, and she the least;
218 The queen close clasp'd the daughter to her breast:
219 "Ye heav'nly pow'rs, ah spare me one," she cry'd,
220 "Ah! spare me one," the vocal hills reply'd:
221 In vain she begs, the *Fates* her suit deny,
222 In her embrace she sees her daughter die.

223 *, ^{auth1} "The queen of all her family bereft,
224 "Without or husband, son, or daughter left,
225 "Grew stupid at the shock. The passing air
226 "Made no impression on her stiff'ning hair.

227 "The blood forsook her face: amidst the flood
228 "Pour'd from her cheeks, quite fix'd her eye-balls stood.
229 "Her tongue, her palate both obdurate grew,
230 "Her curdled veins no longer motion knew;
231 "The use of neck, and arms, and feet was gone,
232 "And ev'n her bowels hard'ned into stone:
233 "A marble statue now the queen appears,
234 "But from the marble steal the silent tears."

Footnotes

auth1 This Verse to the End is ther Work of another Hand. [Wheatley's note.]

"Upon Being Brought from Africa to America"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 18 -

On being brought from AFRICA to AMERICA, ^{brought}

- 1 'Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land,
- 2 Taught my benighted soul to understand
- 3 That there's a God, that there's a *Saviour* too:
- 4 Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
- 5 Some view, ^{some} our sable race with scornful eye,
- 6 "Their colour is a diabolic die."
- 7 Remember, *Christians* , *Negros* , black as Cain , ^{Cain} ,
- 8 May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

Footnotes

brought The title of one Wheatley's most (in)famous poems, "On being brought from AFRICA to AMERICA" alludes to the experiences of many Africans who became subject to the [transatlantic slave trade](#). Wheatley uses biblical references and direct address to appeal to a Christian audience, while also defending the ability of her "sable race" to become "refin'd" through Christian theology. Henry Louis Gates, who in *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (1989) situates Wheatley as an important voice in the eighteenth-century debate about natural human rights, summarizes the "recurrent suggestion that Wheatley has remained aloof from matters that were in any sense racial, or more correctly, 'positively' racial," as a "misreading" (74-75). Notable for the complexity of its brief discussion of blackness in the Christian slaveholding American republic, this poem in particular is frequently criticized for its apparent rejection of Africa and African-ness. However, Wheatley was working within a non-free context, and her critique of slavery is mediated by Christianity acquired as part of her enslavement. For a fuller exploration of Wheatley's poem, see *Authority and Female Authorship in Colonial America*, by William Scheick (especially chapter 4). The image included here, [via the British Library](#), shows a diagram of the Brookes' slave ship (c.1801).

- [JW]

some Wheatley's description of those who "view our sable race with scornful eye" (5) is a clear rejection of what [Lena Hill describes as "ignorant" interpretations of "visual blackness"](#) (37-38), as is her attribution of speech in direct discourse: "'Their color is a diabolic die'" (6). Henry Louis Gates argues that Wheatley's very presence as an author complicated assumptions of "natural" inferiority. For more about this topic, see Gates' *Figures in Black* and Walt Nott's discussion of Wheatley's public persona in ["From 'Uncultivated Barbarian' to 'Poetical Genius': The Public Presence of Phillis Wheatley."](#)

- [TH]

Cain The phrase "black as Cain" is a distortion of the biblical idea of the mark of Cain ([Genesis 4:15](#)) and was used as justification for the enslavement of people of color. Many scholars point out that this was Wheatley's "most maligned poem," ([Hill 37](#)) which is ultimately about the inclusion of Africans in the "Christian family" and her critique of "ignorant" interpretations of "visual blackness" (37-38). For an interesting contemporary read of the mark of Cain in anti-abolitionist discourse, see Josiah Priest's *Slavery as it Relates to the Negro* (1843), where he rejects the possibility that dark-skinned peoples could be related to Adam by blood (134-136). For a larger reading of Wheatley's use of blackness and the role of blackness in the early American imagination, see Lena Hill's chapter "Witnessing Moral Authority in Pre-Abolition Literature," from *Visualizing Blackness and the Creation of the African American Literary Tradition* (2014)

- [JW]

"On IMAGINATION"

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students of Marymount University, James West, Amy Ridderhof

- 65 -

On IMAGINATION.

1 THY various works, imperial queen, we see,
2 How bright their forms! how deck'd with pomp by thee!
3 Thy wond'rous acts in beauteous order stand,
4 And all attest how potent is thine hand.

5 From *Helicon's* refulgent heights attend,
6 Ye sacred choir, and my attempts befriend:
7 To tell her glories with a faithful tongue,
8 Ye blooming graces, triumph in my song.

9 Now here, now there, the roving *Fancy* flies,
10 Till some lov'd object strikes her wand'ring eyes,
11 Whose silken fetters all the senses bind,
12 And soft captivity involves the mind.

- 66 -

13 *Imagination!* who can sing thy force?
14 Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?
15 Soaring through air to find the bright abode,
16 Th' empyreal palace of the thund'ring God,
17 We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,
18 And leave the rolling universe behind:
19 From star to star the mental optics rove,
20 Measure the skies, and range the realms above.
21 There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,
22 Or with new worlds amaze th' unbounded soul.

23 Though *Winter* frowns to *Fancy's* raptur'd eyes
24 The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;
25 The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,

26 And bid their waters murmur o'er the sands.
27 Fair *Flora* may resume her fragrant reign,
28 And with her flow'ry riches deck the plain;
29 *Sylvanus* may diffuse his honours round,
30 And all the forest may with leaves be crown'd:

- 67 -

31 Show'rs may descend, and dews their gems disclose,
32 And nectar sparkle on the blooming rose.

33 Such is thy pow'r, nor are thine orders vain,
34 O thou the leader of the mental train:
35 In full perfection all thy works are wrought,
36 And thine the sceptre o'er the realms of thought.
37 Before thy throne the subject-passions bow,
38 Of subject-passions sov'reign ruler Thou;
39 At thy command joy rushes on the heart,
40 And through the glowing veins the spirits dart.

41 *Fancy* might now her silken pinions try
42 To rise from earth, and sweep th' expanse on high;
43 From *Tithon's* bed now might *Aurora* rise,
44 Her cheeks all glowing with celestial dies,
45 While a pure stream of light o'erflows the skies.
46 The monarch of the day I might behold,
47 And all the mountains tipt with radiant gold,

- 68 -

48 But I reluctant leave the pleasing views,
49 Which *Fancy* dresses to delight the *Muse*;
50 *Winter* austere forbids me to aspire,
51 And northern tempests damp the rising fire;
52 They chill the tides of *Fancy's* flowing sea,
53 Cease then, my song, cease the unequal lay.

Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral

By Phillis Wheatley

Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students and Staff of Marymount University, Students and Staff of The University of Virginia

- [frontispiece] -

- [titlepage] -

POEMS
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS,
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL.
BY
PHILLIS WHEATLEY ,

NEGRO SERVANT to Mr. JOHN WHEATLEY,
of BOSTON, in NEW ENGLAND.

LONDON:

Printed for A. BELL, Bookseller, Aldgate; and sold by
Messrs. COX and BERRY, King-Street, *BOSTON*.
M DCC LXXIII.

- iii -

DEDICATION.

To the Right Honourable the
COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON,

THE FOLLOWING
POEMS
Are most respectfully
Inscribed,
By her much obliged,
Very humble,
And devoted Servant,

Phillis Wheatley.
Boston, June 12,
1773.

PREFACE.

THE following POEMS were written originally for the Amusement of the Author, as they were the Products of her leisure Moments. She had no Intention ever to have published them; nor would they now have made their Appearance, but at the Importunity of many of her best, and most generous Friends; to whom she considers herself, as under the greatest Obligations.

As her Attempts in Poetry are now sent into the World, it is hoped the Critic will not severely censure their Defects; and we presume they have too much Merit

- v -

to be cast aside with Contempt, and worthless and trifling Effusions.

As to the Disadvantages she has laboured under, with Regard to Learning, nothing needs to be offered, as her Master's Letter in the following Page will sufficiently shew the Difficulties in the Respect she had to encounter.

With all their Imperfections, the Poems are now humbly submitted to the Perusal of the Public.

Phillis Wheatley, the surprising African Poetess, arrived from England, at Boston, about a fortnight ago.

Rivington's Gazetteer September 23, 1773. No. 23. 3:2.

Boston, September 20, 1773. In Captains [unclear] from London, came Passengers. Captain [unclear] and Lady, Mr. Alring; also Phyllis, the extraordinary poetical genius, Negro Servant to Mr. John Wheatley, of this Town.

Boston Evening Post, 29 Sep. 1773.3:2:3:2:23 Sept.

The following is a Copy of a LETTER sent by the Author's Master to the Publisher

PHILLIS was brought from Africa to America, in the Year 1761, between Seven and Eight Years of Age. Without any Assistance from School Education, and by only what she was taught in the Family, she, in sixteen Months Time from her Arrival, attained the English Language, to which she was an utter Stranger before, the such a Degree, as to read any, the most difficult Parts of the Sacred Writings, to the great Astonishment of all who heard her.

As to her WRITING, her own Curiosity led her to it; and this she learnt in so short a Time, that in the Year 1765, she wrote a Letter to the Rev. Mr. OCCOM, ^{occom}, the Indian Minister, while in England.

She has a great Inclination to learn the Latin Tongue, and has made some Progress in it. This Relation is given by her Master who bought her, and with whom she now lives.

JOHN WHEATLEY. Boston, Nov. 14, 1772.

To the PUBLICK.

AS it has been repeatedly suggested to the Publisher, by Persons, who have seen the Manuscript, that Numbers would be ready to suspect they were not really the Writings of PHILLIS, he has procured the following Attestation, from the most respectable Characters in Boston, that none might have the least Ground for disputing their Original.

WE whose Names are under-written, do assure the World, that the POEMS specified in the following Page, *, ^{auth1} were (as we verily believe) written by PHILLIS, a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since, brought an uncultivated Barbarian from Africa, and has ever since been, and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in this Town. She has been examined by some of the best Judges, and is thought qualified to write them.

His Excellency THOMAS HUTCHINSON, *Governor,* *The Hon.* ANDREW OLIVER, *Lieutenant-Governor.* *The Hon.* Thomas Hubbard, *The Hon.* John Erving, *The Hon.* James Pitts, *The Hon.* Harrison Gray, *The Hon.* James Bowdoin, John Hancock, *Esq;* Joseph Green, *Esq;* Richard Carey, *Esq;* *The Rev.* Charles Cheuney, *D.D.* *The Rev.* Mather Byles, *D.D.* *The Rev.* Ed. Pemberton, *D.D.* *The Rev.* Andrew Elliot, *D.D.* *The Rev.* Samuel Cooper, *D.D.* *The Rev. Mr.* Samuel Mather, *The Rev. Mr.* John Moorhead, *Mr.* John Wheatley, *her Master.*

N. B. The original Attestation, signed by the above Gentlemen, may be seen by applying to Archibald Bell, Bookseller, No. 8, Aldgate-Street.

POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

TO MAECENAS.

1 MAECENAS, ^{maecenas}, you, beneath the myrtle shade,
2 Read o'er what poets sung, and shepherds play'd.
3 What felt those poets but you feel the same?
4 Does not your soul possess the sacred flame?
5 Their noble strains your equal genius shares
6 In softer language, and diviner airs.

7 While Homer , ^{homer} paints, lo! circumfus'd in air,
8 Celestial Gods in mortal forms appear;

- 10 -

9 Swift as they move hear each recess rebound,
10 Heav'n quakes, earth trembles, and the shores resound.
11 Great Sire of verse, before my mortal eyes,
12 The lightnings blaze across the vaulted skies,
13 And, as the thunder shakes the heav'nly plains,
14 A deep-felt horror thrills through all my veins.
15 When gentler strains demand thy graceful song,
16 The length'ning line moves languishing along.
17 When great Patroclus courts Achilles' aid, ^{achilles},
18 The grateful tribute of my tears is paid;
19 Prone on the shore he feels the pangs of love,
20 And stern Pelides , ^{pelides} tend'rest passions move.

21 Great Maro's strain, ^{maro} in heav'nly numbers flows,
22 The Nine inspire, ^{nine}, and all the bosom glows.
23 O could I rival thine and Virgil 's page,
24 Or claim the Muses with the Mantuan Sage, ^{mantua};
25 Soon the same beauties should my mind adorn,
26 And the same ardors in my soul should burn:
27 Then should my song in bolder notes arise,
28 And all my numbers pleasingly surprize;

- 11 -

29 But here I sit, and mourn a grov'ling mind,
30 That fain, ^{fain} would mount, and ride upon the wind.

31 Not you, my friend, these plaintive strains become,
32 Not you, whose bosom is the *Muses* home;
33 When they from tow'ring Helicon , ^{helicon} retire,
34 They fan in you the bright immortal fire,
35 But I less happy, cannot raise the song,
36 The fault'ring, ^{faltering} music dies upon my tongue.

37 The happier Terence , ^{terence*}, ^{auth2} all the choir inspir'd,
38 His soul replenish'd, and his bosom fir'd;
39 But say, ye *Muses* , why this partial grace,
40 To one alone of *Afric* 's sable race;
41 From age to age transmitting thus his name
42 With the first glory in the rolls of fame?

43 Thy virtues, great *Maecenas!* shall be sung
44 In praise of him, from whom those virtues sprung:

- 12 -

45 While blooming wreaths around thy temples spread,
46 I'll snatch a laurel, ^{laurel} from thine honour'd head,
47 While you indulgent smile upon the deed.

48 As long as Thames , ^{thames} in streams majestic flows,
49 Or Naiads , ^{naiads} in their oozy beds repose
50 While Phoebus , ^{phoebus} reigns above the starry train,
51 While bright Aurora , ^{aurora} purples o'er the main,
52 So long, great Sir, the muse thy praise shall sing,
53 So long thy praise shall make Parnassus , ^{parnassus} ring:
54 Then grant, *Maecenas* , thy paternal rays,
55 Hear me propitious, and defend my lays.

ON VIRTUE.

1 O Thou bright jewel in my aim I strive
2 To comprehend thee. Thine own words declare
3 Wisdom is higher than a fool can reach.
4 I cease to wonder, and no more attempt
5 Thine height t' explore, or fathom thy profound.
6 But, O my soul, sink not into despair,
7 *Virtue* is near thee, and with gentle hand
8 Would now embrace thee, hovers o'er thine head.
9 Fain would the heav'n-born soul with her converse,

- 13 -

10 Then seek, then court her for her promis'd bliss.
11 Auspicious queen, thine heav'nly pinions spread,
12 And lead celestial *Chastity* along;
13 Lo! now her sacred retinue descends,
14 Array'd in glory from the orbs above.
15 Attend me, *Virtue*, thro' my youthful years!
16 O leave me not to the false joys of time!
17 But guide my steps to endless life and bliss.

- 14 -

18 *Greatness*, or *Goodness*, say what I shall call thee,
19 To give an higher appellation still,
20 Teach me a better strain, a nobler lay,
21 O thou, enthron'd with Cherubs in the realms of day!

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,^{cambridge} IN NEW-
ENGLAND.

1 WHILE an intrinsic ardor,^{ardor} prompts to write,
2 The muses,^{muses} promise to assist my pen;
3 'Twas not long since I left my native shore
4 The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom,^{egyptian}:
5 Father of mercy, 'twas thy gracious hand
6 Brought me in safety from those dark abodes.

Students, to you 'tis giv'n to scan the heights
7 Above, to traverse the ethereal space,
8 And mark the systems of revolving worlds,^{systems}.
9 Still more, ye sons of science ye receive
10 The blissful news by messengers from heav'n,
11 How *Jesus* ' blood for your redemption flows.
12 See him with hands out-stretcht upon the cross;
13 Immense compassion in his bosom glows;
14 He hears revilers, nor resents their scorn:
15 What matchless mercy in the Son of God!
16 When the whole human race by sin had fall'n,

17 He deign'd,^{deign} to die that they might rise again,
18 And share with him in the sublimest skies,
19 Life without death, and glory without end.

20 Improve your privileges while they stay,
21 Ye pupils, and each hour redeem, that bears
22 Or good or bad report of you to heav'n.
23 Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul,
24 By you be shunn'd, nor once remit your guard;
25 Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg.
26 Ye blooming plants of human race divine,
27 An Ethiop ,^{ethiop} tells you 'tis your greatest foe;
28 Its transient sweetness turns to endless pain,
29 And in immense perdition,^{perdition} sinks the soul.

To the KING's Most Excellent Majesty.

1768.

- 1 YOUR subjects hope, dread Sire --
- 2 The crown upon your brows may flourish long,
- 3 And that your arm may in your God be strong!
- 4 O may your sceptre num'rous nations sway,
- 5 And all with love and readiness obey!

- 6 But how shall we the *British* king reward!
- 7 Rule thou in peace, our father, and our lord!
- 8 Midst the remembrance of thy favours past,
- 9 The meanest peasants most admire the last.* ^{auth3}
- 10 May *George* , belov'd by all the nations round,
- 11 Live with heav'ns choicest constant blessings crown'd!
- 12 Great God, direct, and guard him from on high
- 13 And from his head let ev'ry evil fly!
- 14 And may each clime with equal gladness see
- 15 A monarch's smile can set his subjects free!

On being brought from AFRICA to AMERICA., ^{brought}

1 'Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land,
2 Taught my benighted soul to understand
3 That there's a God, that there's a *Saviour* too:
4 Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
5 Some view, ^{view} our sable race with scornful eye,
6 "Their colour is a diabolic die."
7 Remember, *Christians* , *Negros* , black as *Cain* , ^{cain} ,
8 May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

On the Death of the Rev. DR. SEWELL.

1769.

1 ERE yet the morn its lovely blushes spread,
2 See *Sewell* number'd with the happy dead.
3 Hail, holy man, arriv'd th' immortal shore,
4 Though we shall hear thy warning voice no more.
5 Come, let us all behold with wishful eyes
6 The saint ascending to his native skies;
7 From hence the prophet wing'd his rapt'rous way
8 To the blest mansions in eternal day.
9 Then begging for the Spirit of our God,
10 And panting eager for the same abode,
11 Come, let us all with the same vigour rise,
12 And take a prospect of the blissful skies;
13 While on our minds *Christ's* image is imprest,
14 And the dear Saviour glows in ev'ry breast.
15 Thrice happy saint! to find thy heav'n at last,
16 What compensation for the evils past!

- 20 -

17 Great God, incomprehensible, unknown
18 By sense, we bow at thine exalted throne.
19 O, while we beg thine excellence to feel,
20 Thy sacred Spirit to our hearts reveal,
21 And give us of that mercy to partake,
22 Which thou hast promis'd for the *Saviour*'s sake!

23 "*Sewell* is dead." Swift-pinion'd *Fame* thus cry'd.
24 "Is *Sewell* dead," my trembling tongue reply'd,
25 O what a blessing in his flight deny'd!
26 How oft for us the holy prophet pray'd!
27 How oft to us the Word of Life convey'd!
28 By duty urg'd my mournful verse to close,
29 I for his tomb this epitaph compose.

30 "Lo, here a man, redeem'd by *Jesus*' blood,
31 "A sinner once, but now a saint with God;
32 "Behold ye rich, ye poor, ye fools, ye wise,
33 "Nor let his monument your heart surprize;
34 ""Twill tell you what this holy man has done,
35 "Which gives him brighter lustre than the sun.

36 "Listen, ye happy, from your seats above.
37 "I speak sincerely, while I speak and love,
38 "He sought the paths of piety and truth,
39 "By these made happy from his early youth!
40 "In blooming years that grace divine he felt,
41 "Which rescues sinners from the chains of guilt.
42 "Mourn him, ye indigent, whom he has fed,
43 "And henceforth seek, like him, for living bread;
44 "Ev'n *Christ* , the bread descending from above,
45 "And ask an int'rest in his saving love.
46 "Mourn him, ye youth, to whom he oft has told
47 "God's gracious wonders from the times of old.
48 "I, too have cause this mighty loss to mourn,
49 "For he my monitor will not return.
50 "O when shall we to his blest state arrive?
51 "When the same graces in our bosoms thrive."

On the Death of the Rev. MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD., ^{whitfield}

1770.

1 HAIL, happy saint, on thine immortal throne,
2 Possesst of glory, life, and bliss unknown;
3 We hear no more the music of thy tongue,
4 Thy wonted auditories, ^{wonted} cease to throng.
5 Thy sermons in unequall'd accents, ^{unequalled} flow'd,
6 And ev'ry bosom with devotion glow'd;
7 Thou didst in strains of eloquence refin'd
8 In flame the heart, and captivate the mind.
9 Unhappy we the setting sun deplore,
10 So glorious once, but ah! it shines no more.

11 Behold the prophet in his tow'ring flight!
12 He leaves the earth for heav'n's unmeasur'd height,
13 And worlds unknown receive him from our sight.
14 There *Whitefield* wings with rapid course his way,
15 And sails to Zion , ^{zion} through vast seas of day.
16 Thy pray'rs, great saint, and thine incessant cries
17 Have pierc'd the bosom of thy native skies.

- 23 -

18 Thou moon hast seen, and all the stars of light,
19 How he has wrestled with his God by night.
20 He pray'd that grace in ev'ry heart might dwell,
21 He long'd to see *America* excel;
22 He charg'd its youth that ev'ry grace divine
23 Should with full lustre in their conduct shine;
24 That Saviour, which his soul did first receive,
25 The greatest gift that ev'n a God can give,
26 He freely offer'd to the num'rous throng,
27 That on his lips with list'ning pleasure hung.

28 "Take him, ye wretched, for your only good,
29 "Take him ye starving sinners, for your food;
30 "Ye thirsty, come to this life-giving stream,
31 "Ye preachers, take him for your joyful theme;
32 "Take him my dear *Americans* , he said,
33 "Be your complaints on his kind bosom laid:
34 "Take him, ye *Africans* , he longs for you,

35 "*Impartial Saviour* is his title due:
36 "Wash'd in the fountain of redeeming blood,
37 "You shall be sons, and kings, and priests to God."

- 24 -

38 Great *Countess* , ^{countess} , we *Americans* revere
39 Thy name, and mingle in thy grief sincere;
40 *New England* deeply feels, the *Orphans* , ^{orphans} mourn,
41 Their more than father will no more return.

42 But, though arrested by the hand of death,
43 *Whitefield* no more exerts his lab'ring breath,
44 Yet let us view him in th' eternal skies,
45 Let ev'ry heart to this bright vision rise;
46 While the tomb safe retains its sacred trust,
47 Till life divine re-animates his dust.

On the Death of a young Lady of Five Years of Age.

1 FROM dark abodes to fair ethereal light
2 Th' enraptur'd innocent has wing'd her flight;
3 On the kind bosom of eternal love
4 She finds unknown beatitude above.
5 This know, ye parents, nor her loss deplore,
6 She feels the iron hand of pain no more;
7 The dispensations of unerring grace,
8 Should turn your sorrows into grateful praise;
9 Let then no tears for her henceforward flow,
10 No more distress'd in our dark vale below.

11 Her morning sun, which rose divinely bright,
12 Was quickly mantled with the gloom of night;
13 But hear in heav'n's blest bow'rs your *Nancy* fair,
14 And learn to imitate her language there.
15 "Thou, Lord, whom I behold with glory crown'd,
16 "By what sweet name, and in what tuneful sound

17 "Wilt thou be prais'd? Seraphic pow'rs are faint
18 "Infinite love and majesty to paint.
19 "To thee let all their graceful voices raise,
20 "And saints and angels join their songs of praise."

21 Perfect in bliss she from her heav'nly home
22 Looks down, and smiling beckons you to come;
23 Why then, fond parents, why these fruitless groans?
24 Restrain your tears, and cease your plaintive moans.
25 Freed from a world of sin, and snares, and pain,
26 Why would you wish your daughter back again?
27 No -- bow resign'd. Let hope your grief control,
28 And check the rising tumult of the soul.
29 Calm in the prosperous, and adverse day,
30 Adore the God who gives and takes away;
31 Eye him in all, his holy name revere,
32 Upright your actions, and your hearts sincere,
33 Till having sail'd through life's tempestuous sea,
34 And from its rocks, and boist'rous billows free,
35 Yourselves, safe landed on the blissful shore,
36 Shall join your happy babe to part no more.

On the Death of a young Gentleman.

1 WHO taught thee conflict with the pow'rs of night,
2 To vanquish Satan in the fields of fight?
3 Who strung thy feeble arms with might unknown,
4 How great thy conquest, and how bright thy crown!
5 War with each pryncedom, throne, and pow'r is o'er,
6 The scene is ended to return no more.
7 O could my muse thy seat on high behold,
8 How deckt with laurel, how enrich'd with gold!
9 O could she hear what praise thine harp employs,
10 How sweet thine anthems, how divine thy joys!
11 What heav'nly grandeur should exalt her strain!
12 What holy raptures in her numbers reign!
13 To sooth the troubles of the mind to peace,
14 To still the tumult of life's tossing seas,

15 To ease the anguish of the parents heart,
16 What shall my sympathizing verse impart?
17 Where is the balm to heal so deep a wound?
18 Where shall a sov'reign remedy be found?
19 Look, gracious Spirit, from thine heav'nly bow'r,
20 And thy full joys into their bosoms pour;
21 The raging tempest of their grief control,
22 And spread the dawn of glory through the soul,
23 To eye the path the saint departed trod,
24 And trace him to the bosom of his God.

To a Lady on the Death of her Husband.

1 GRIM monarch! see, depriv'd of vital breath,
2 A young physician in the dust of death:
3 Dost thou go on incessant to destroy,
4 Our griefs to double, and lay waste our joy?
5 *Enough* thou never yet wast known to say,
6 Though millions die, the vassals of thy sway:
7 Nor youth, nor science, nor the ties of love,
8 Nor aught on earth thy flinty heart can move.
9 The friend, the spouse from his dire dart to save,
10 In vain we ask the sovereign of the grave.
11 Fair mourner, there see thy lov'd *Leonard* laid,
12 And o'er him spread the deep impervious shade;
13 Clos'd are his eyes, and heavy fetters keep
14 His senses bound in never-waking sleep,
15 Till time shall cease, till many a starry world
16 Shall fall from heav'n, in dire confusion hurl'd,
17 Till nature in her final wreck shall lie,
18 And her last groan shall rend the azure sky:

19 Not, not till then his active soul shall claim
20 His body, a divine immortal frame.

21 But see the softly-stealing tears apace
22 Pursue each other down the mourner's face;
23 But cease thy tears, bid ev'ry sigh depart,
24 And cast the load of anguish from thine heart:
25 From the cold shell of his great soul arise,
26 And look beyond, thou native of the skies;
27 There fix thy view, where fleeter than the wind
28 Thy *Leonard* mounts, and leaves the earth behind.
29 Thyself prepare to pass the vale of night
30 To join for ever on the hills of light:
31 To thine embrace this joyful spirit moves
32 To thee, the partner of his earthly loves;
33 He welcomes thee to pleasures more refin'd,
34 And better suited to th' immortal mind.

GOLIATH OF GATH.

I SAM. Chap. xvii.

1 YE martial pow'rs, and all ye tuneful nine,
2 Inspire my song, and aid my high design.
3 The dreadful scenes and toils of war I write,
4 The ardent warriors, and the fields of fight:
5 You best remember, and you best can sing
6 The acts of heroes to the vocal string:
7 Resume the lays with which your sacred lyre,
8 Did then the poet and the sage inspire.

9 Now front to front the armies were display'd,
10 Here *Israel* rang'd, and there the foes array'd;
11 The hosts on two opposing mountains stood,
12 Thick as the foliage of the waving wood;
13 Between them an extensive valley lay,
14 O'er which the gleaming armour pour'd the day,
15 When from the camp of the *Philistine* foes,
16 Dreadful to view, a mighty warrior rose;
17 In the dire deeds of bleeding battle skill'd,
18 The monster stalks the terror of the field.

- 32 [copy 2] -

19 From *Gath* he sprung, *Goliath* was his name,
20 Of fierce deportment, and gigantic frame:
21 A brazen helmet on his head was plac'd,
22 A coat of mail his form terrific grac'd,
23 The greaves his legs, the targe his shoulders prest:
24 Dreadful in arms high-tow'ring o'er the rest
25 A spear he proudly wav'd, whose iron head,
26 Strange to relate, six hundred shekels weigh'd;
27 He strode along, and shook the ample field,
28 While *Phoebus* blaz'd refulgent on his shield:
29 Through *Jacob's* race a chilling horror ran,
30 When thus the huge, enormous chief began:

31 "Say, what the cause that in this proud array
32 "You set your battle in the face of day?
33 "One hero find in all your vaunting train,
34 "Then see who loses, and who wins the plain;
35 "For he who wins, in triumph may demand

36 "Perpetual service from the vanquish'd land:
37 "Your armies I defy, your force despise,
38 "By far inferior in *Philistia's* eyes:

- 33 [copy 2] -

39 "Produce a man, and let us try the fight,
40 "Decide the contest, and the victor's right."

41 Thus challeng'd he: all *Israel* stood amaz'd,
42 And ev'ry chief in consternation gaz'd;
43 But *Jesse's* son in youthful bloom appears,
44 And warlike courage far beyond his years:
45 He left the folds, he left the flow'ry meads,
46 And soft recesses of the sylvan shades.
47 Now *Israel's* monarch, and his troops arise,
48 With peals of shouts ascending to the skies;
49 In *Elah's* vale the scene of combat lies.

50 When the fair morning blush'd with orient red,
51 What *David's* sire enjoin'd the son obey'd,
52 And swift of foot towards the trench he came,
53 Where glow'd each bosom with the martial flame.
54 He leaves his carriage to another's care,
55 And runs to greet his brethren of the war.
56 While yet they spake the giant-chief arose,
57 Repeats the challenge, and insults his foes:

- 34 [copy 2] -

58 Struck with the sound, and trembling at the view,
59 Affrighted *Israel* from its post withdrew.
60 "Observe ye this tremendous foe, they cry'd,
61 "Who in proud vaunts our armies hath defy'd:
62 "Whoever lays him prostrate on the plain,
63 "Freedom in *Israel* for his house shall gain;
64 "And on him wealth unknown the king will pour,
65 "And give his royal daughter for his dow'r."

66 Then *Jesse's* youngest hope: "My brethren say,
67 "What shall be done for him who takes away
68 "Reproach from *Jacob*, who destroys the chief,
69 "And puts a period to his country's grief.
70 "He vaunts the honours of his arms abroad,
71 "And scorns the armies of the living God."

72 Thus spoke the youth, th' attentive people ey'd
73 The wond'rous hero, and again reply'd:

74 "Such the rewards our monarch will bestow,
75 "On him who conquers, and destroys his foe."

- 35 [copy 2] -

76 *Eliab* heard, and kindled into ire
77 To hear his shepherd-brother thus inquire,
78 And thus begun? "What errand brought thee? say
79 "Who keeps thy flock? or does it go astray?
80 "I know the base ambition of thine heart,
81 "But back in safety from the field depart."

82 *Eliab* thus to *Jesse's* youngest heir,
83 Express'd his wrath in accents most severe.
84 When to his brother mildly he reply'd,
85 "What have I done? or what the cause to chide?"

86 The words were told before the king, who sent
87 For the young hero to his royal tent:
88 Before the monarch dauntless he began,
89 "For this *Philistine* fail no heart of man:
90 "I'll take the vale, and with the giant fight:
91 "I dread not all his boasts, nor all his might."

- 36 [copy 2] -

92 When thus the king: "Dar'st thou a stripling go,
93 "And venture combat with so great a foe?
94 "Who all his days has been inur'd to fight,
95 "And made its deeds his study and delight:
96 "Battles and bloodshed brought the monster forth,
97 "And clouds and whirlwinds usher'd in his birth."
98 When *David* thus: "I kept the fleecy care,
99 "And out there rush'd a lion and a bear;
100 "A tender lamb the hungry lion took,
101 "And with no other weapon than my crook
102 "Bold I pursu'd, and chas'd him o'er the field,
103 "The prey deliver'd, and the felon kill'd:
104 "As thus the lion and the bear I slew,
105 "So shall *Goliath* fall, and all his crew:
106 "The God, who sav'd me from these beasts of prey,
107 "By me this monster in the dust shall lay."
108 So *David* spoke. The wond'ring king reply'd;
109 "Go thou with heav'n and victory on thy side:
110 "This coat of mail, this sword gird on," he said,
111 And plac'd a mighty helmet on his head:

- 37 [copy 2] -

112 The coat, the sword, the helm he laid aside,
113 Nor chose to venture with those arms untry'd,
114 Then took his staff, and to the neighb'ring brook
115 Instant he ran, and thence five pebbles took.
116 Mean time descended to *Philistia's* son
117 A radiant cherub, and he thus begun:
118 "Goliath, well thou know'st thou hast defy'd
119 "Yon Hebrew armies, and their God deny'd:
120 "Rebellious wretch! audacious worm! forbear,
121 "Nor tempt the vengeance of their God too far:
122 "Them, who with his omnipotence contend,
123 "No eye shall pity, and no arm defend:
124 "Proud as thou art, in short liv'd glory great,
125 "I come to tell thee thine approaching fate.
126 "Regard my words. The judge of all the gods,
127 "Beneath whose steps the tow'ring mountain nods,
128 "Will give thine armies to the savage brood,
129 "That cut the liquid air, or range the wood.
130 "Thee too a well-aim'd pebble shall destroy,
131 "And thou shalt perish by a beardless boy:

- 38 [copy 2] -

132 "Such is the mandate from the realms above,
133 "And should I try the vengeance to remove,
134 "Myself a rebel to my king would prove.
135 "*Goliath* say, shall grace to him be shown,
136 "Who dares heav'ns monarch, and insults his throne?"

137 "Your words are lost on me," the giant cries,
138 While fear and wrath contended in his eyes,
139 When thus the messenger from heav'n replies:
140 "Provoke no more *Jehovah's* awful hand
141 "To hurl its vengeance on thy guilty land:
142 "He grasps the thunder, and, he wings the storm,
143 "Servants their sov'reign's orders to perform."

144 The angel spoke, and turn'd his eyes away,
145 Adding new radiance to the rising day.

146 Now *David* comes: the fatal stones demand
147 His left, the staff engag'd his better hand

- 39 [copy 2] -

148 The giant mov'd, and from his tow'ring height
149 Survey'd the stripling, and disdain'd the fight,
150 And thus began: "Am I a dog with thee?"

151 "Bring'st thou no armour, but a staff to me?
152 "The gods on thee their vullied curses pour,
153 "And beasts and birds of prey thy flesh devour."

154 *David* undaunted thus, "Thy spear and shield
155 "Shall no protection to thy body yield:
156 "*Jehovah's* name -- no other arms I bear,
157 "I ask no other in this glorious war.
158 "To-day the Lord of Hosts to me will give
159 "Vict'ry, to-day thy doom thou shalt receive;
160 "The fate you threaten shall your own become,
161 "And beasts shall be your animated tomb,
162 "That all the earth's inhabitants may know
163 "That there's a God, who governs all below
164 "This great assembly too shall witness stand,
165 "That needs nor sword, nor spear, th' Almighty's hand:

- 40 [copy 2] -

166 "The battle his, the conquest he bestows,
167 "And to our pow'r consigns our hated foes."

168 Thus *David* spoke; *Goliath* heard and came
169 To meet the hero in the field of fame.
170 Ah! fatal meeting to thy troops and thee,
171 But thou wast deaf to the divine decree;
172 Young *David* meets thee, meets thee not in vain;
173 'Tis thine to perish on th' ensanguin'd plain.

174 And now the youth the forceful pebble slung
175 *Philistia* trembled as it whizz'd along:
176 In his dread forehead, where the helmet ends,
177 Just o'er the brows the well-aim'd stone descends,
178 It pierc'd the skull, and shatter'd all the brain,
179 Prone on his face he tumbled to the plain:
180 *Goliath's* fall no smaller terror yields
181 Than riving thunders in aerial fields:
182 The soul still ling'ring in its lov'd abode,
183 Till conq'ring *David* o'er the giant strode:
184 *Goliath's* sword then laid its master dead,
185 And from the body hew'd the ghastly head;

- 41 -

186 The blood in gushing torrents drench'd the plains,
187 The soul found passage through the spouting veins.

188 And now aloud th' illustrious victor said,

189 "Where are your boastings now your champion's dead?"
190 Scarce had he spoke, when the *Philistines* fled:
191 But fled in vain; the conqu'ror swift pursu'd:
192 What scenes of slaughter! and what seas of blood!
193 There *Saul* thy thousands grasp'd th' impurpled sand
194 In pangs of death the conquest of thine hand;
195 And *David* there were thy ten thousands laid:
196 Thus *Israel's* damsels musically play'd.

197 Near *Gath* and *Ekron* many an hero lay,
198 Breath'd out their souls, and curs'd the light of day:
199 Their fury, quench'd by death, no longer burns,
200 And *David* with *Goliath's* head returns,
201 To *Salem* brought, but in his tent he plac'd
202 The load of armour which the giant grac'd.

- 42 -

203 His monarch saw him coming from the war,
204 And thus demanded of the son of *Ner* .
205 "Say, who is this amazing youth?" he cry'd,
206 When thus the leader of the host reply'd;
207 "As lives thy soul I know not whence he sprung,
208 "So great in prowess though in years so young:"
209 "Inquire whose son is he," the sov'reign said,
210 "Before whose conq'ring arm *Philistia* fled."
211 Before the king behold the stripling stand,
212 *Goliath* 's head depending from his hand:
213 To him the king: "Say of what martial line
214 "Art thou, young hero, and what sire was thine?"
215 He humbly thus; "the son of *Jesse* I:
216 "I came the glories of the field to try.
217 "Small is my tribe, but valiant in the fight;
218 "Small is my city, but thy royal right."
219 "Then take the promis'd gifts," the monarch cry'd,
220 Conferring riches and the royal bride:
221 "Knit to my soul for ever thou remain
222 "With me, nor quit my regal roof again."

Thoughts on the WORKS of PROVIDENCE.

1 ARISE, my soul, on wings enraptur'd, rise
2 To praise the monarch of the earth and skies,
3 Whose goodness and beneficence appear
4 As round its centre moves the rolling year,
5 Or when the morning glows with rosy charms,
6 Or the sun slumbers in the ocean's arms:
7 Of light divine be a rich portion lent
8 To guide my soul, and favour my intent.
9 Celestial muse, my arduous flight sustain,
10 And raise my mind to a seraphic strain!

11 Ador'd for ever be the God unseen,
12 Which round the sun revolves this vast machine,
13 Though to his eye its mass a point appears:
14 Ador'd the God that whirls surrounding spheres,
15 Which first ordain'd that mighty *Sol* should reign
16 The peerless monarch of th' ethereal train:

17 Of miles twice forty millions is his height,
18 And yet his radiance dazzles mortal sight
19 So far beneath -- from him th' extended earth
20 Vigour derives, and ev'ry flow'ry birth:
21 Vast through her orb she moves with easy grace
22 Around her *Phoebus* in unbounded space;
23 True to her course th' impetuous storm derides,
24 Triumphant o'er the winds, and surging tides.

25 Almighty, in these wond'rous works of thine,
26 What *Pow'r* , what *Wisdom* , and what *Goodnes* shine?
27 And are thy wonders, Lord, by men explor'd,
28 And yet creating glory unador'd!

29 Creation smiles in various beauty gay,
30 While day to night, and night succeeds to day:
31 That *Wisdom* , which attends *Jehovah's* ways,
32 Shines most conspicuous in the solar rays:
33 Without them, destitute of heat and light,
34 This world would be the reign of endless night:

35 In their excess how would our race complain,
36 Abhorring life! how hate its length'ned chain!
37 From air adust what num'rous ills would rise?
38 What dire contagion taint the burning skies?
39 What pestilential vapours, fraught with death,
40 Would rise, and overspread the lands beneath?

41 Hail, smiling morn, that from the orient main
42 Ascending dost adorn the heav'nly plain!
43 So rich, so various are thy beauteous dies,
44 That spread through all the circuit of the skies,
45 That, full of thee, my soul in rapture soars,
46 And thy great God, the cause of all adores.

47 O'er beings infinite his love extends,
48 His *Wisdom* rules them, and his *Pow'r* defends.
49 When tasks diurnal tire the human frame,
50 The spirits faint, and dim the vital flame,
51 Then too that ever active bounty shines,
52 Which not infinity of space confines.
53 The sable veil, that *Night* in silence draws,
54 Conceals effects, but shews th' *Almighty Cause* ;

- 46 -

55 Night seals in sleep the wide creation fair,
56 And all is peaceful but the brow of care.
57 Again, gay *Phoebus* , as the day before,
58 Wakes ev'ry eye, but what shall wake no more;
59 Again the face of nature is renew'd,
60 Which still appears harmonious, fair, and good.
61 May grateful strains salute the smiling morn,
62 Before its beams the eastern hills adorn!

63 Shall day to day and night to night conspire
64 To show the goodness of the Almighty Sire?
65 This mental voice shall man regardless hear,
66 And never, never raise the filial pray'r?
67 To-day, O hearken, nor your folly mourn
68 For time mispent, that never will return.

69 But see the sons of vegetation rise,
70 And spread their leafy banners to the skies.
71 All-wise Almighty Providence we trace
72 In trees, and plants, and all the flow'ry race;
73 As clear as in the nobler frame of man,
74 All lovely copies of the Maker's plan.

75 The pow'r the same that forms a ray of light,
76 That call'd creation from eternal night.
77 "Let there be light," he said: from his profound
78 Old *Chaos* heard, and trembled at the sound:
79 Swift as the word, inspir'd by pow'r divine,
80 Behold the light around its maker shine,
81 The first fair product of th' omnific God,
82 And now through all his works diffus'd abroad.

83 As reason's pow'rs by day our God disclose,
84 So we may trace him in the night's repose:
85 Say what is sleep? and dreams how passing strange!
86 When action ceases, and ideas range
87 Licentious and unbounded o'er the plains,
88 Where *Fancy's* queen in giddy triumph reigns.
89 Hear in soft strains the dreaming lover sigh
90 To a kind fair, or rave in jealousy;
91 On pleasure now, and now on vengeance bent,
92 The lab'ring passions struggle for a vent.
93 What pow'r, O man! thy *reason* then restores,
94 So long suspended in nocturnal hours?

95 What secret hand returns the mental train,
96 And gives improv'd thine active pow'rs again?
97 From thee, O man, what gratitude should rise!
98 And, when from balmy sleep thou op'st thine eyes,
99 Let thy first thoughts be praises to the skies.
100 How merciful our God who thus imparts
101 O'erflowing tides of joy to human hearts,
102 When wants and woes might be our righteous lot,
103 Our God forgetting, by our God forgot!

104 Among the mental pow'rs a question rose,
105 "What most the image of th' Eternal shows?"
106 When thus to *Reason* (so let *Fancy* rove)
107 Her great companion spoke immortal *Love* .

108 "Say, mighty pow'r, how long shall strife prevail,
109 "And with its murmurs load the whisp'ring gale?
110 "Refer the cause to *Recollection's* shrine,
111 "Who loud proclaims my origin divine,

112 "The cause whence heav'n and earth began to be,
113 "And is not man immortaliz'd by me?
114 "*Reason* let this most causeless strife subside."
115 Thus *Love* pronounc'd, and *Reason* thus reply'd.

116 "Thy birth, celestial queen! 'tis mine to own,
117 "In thee resplendent is the Godhead shown;
118 "Thy words persuade, my soul enraptur'd feels
119 "Resistless beauty which thy smile reveals."
120 Ardent she spoke, and, kindling at her charms,
121 She clasp'd the blooming goddess in her arms.

122 Infinite *Love* where'er we turn our eyes
123 Appears: this ev'ry creature's wants supplies;
124 This most is heard in *Nature's* constant voice,
125 This makes the morn, and this the eve rejoice;
126 This bids the fost'ring rains and dews descend
127 To nourish all, to serve one gen'ral end,

- 50 -

128 The good of man: yet man ungrateful pays
129 But little homage, and but little praise.
130 To him, whose works array'd with mercy shine
131 What songs should rise, how constant, how divine!

To a Lady on the Death of Three Relations.

1 WE trace the pow'r of Death from tomb to tomb,
2 And his are all the ages yet to come.
3 'Tis his to call the planets from on high,
4 To blacken *Phoebus* , and dissolve the sky;
5 His too, when all in his dark realms are hurl'd,
6 From its firm base to shake the solid world;
7 His fatal sceptre rules the spacious whole,
8 And trembling nature rocks from pole to pole.

9 Awful he moves, and wide his wings are spread:
10 Behold thy brother number'd with the dead!
11 From bondage freed, the exulting spirit flies
12 Beyond *Olympus* , and these starry skies.
13 Lost in our woe for thee, blest shade, we mourn
14 In vain; to earth thou never must return.
15 Thy sisters too, fair mourner, feel the dart
16 Of Death, and with fresh torture rend thine heart.

17 Weep not for them, who wish thine happy mind
18 To rise with them, and leave the world behind.

19 As a young plant by hurricanes up torn,
20 So near its parent lies the newly born --
21 But 'midst the bright ethereal train behold
22 It shines superior on a throne of gold:
23 Then, mourner, cease; let hope thy tears restrain,
24 Smile on the tomb, and sooth the raging pain.
25 On yon blest regions fix thy longing view,
26 Mindless of sublunary scenes below;
27 Ascend the sacred mount, in thought arise,
28 And seek substantial, and immortal joys;
29 Where hope receives, where faith to vision springs,
30 And raptur'd seraphs tune th' immortal strings
31 To strains extatic. Thou the chorus join,
32 And to thy father tune the praise divine.

To a Clergyman on the Death of his Lady.

1 WHERE contemplation finds her sacred spring,
2 Where heav'nly music makes the arches ring,
3 Where virtue reigns unsully'd and divine,
4 Where wisdom thron'd, and all the graces shine,
5 There sits thy spouse amidst the radiant throng,
6 While praise eternal warbles from her tongue;
7 There choirs angelic shout her welcome round,
8 With perfect bliss, and peerless glory crown'd.

9 While thy dear mate, to flesh no more confin'd,
10 Exults a blest, an heav'n-ascended mind,
11 Say in thy breast shall floods of sorrow rise?
12 Say shall its torrents overwhelm thine eyes?
13 Amid the seats of heav'n a place is free,
14 And angels ope their bright ranks for thee;
15 For thee they wait, and with expectant eye
16 Thy spouse leans downward from th' empyreal sky:

17 "O come away," her longing spirit cries,
18 "And share with me the raptures of the skies.
19 "Our bliss divine to mortals is unknown;
20 "Immortal life and glory are our own.
21 "There too may the dear pledges of our love
22 "Arrive, and taste with us the joys above;
23 "Attune the harp to more than mortal lays,
24 "And join with us the tribute of their praise
25 "To him, who dy'd stern justice to atone,
27 "And make eternal glory all our own.
28 "He in his death slew ours, and, as he rose,
29 "He crush'd the dire dominion of our foes;
30 "Vain were their hopes to put the God to flight,
31 "Chain us to hell, and bar the gates of light."

32 She spoke, and turn'd from mortal scenes her eyes,
33 Which beam'd celestial radiance o'er the skies.

34 Then thou dear man, no more with grief retire,
35 Let grief no longer damp devotion's fire,
36 But rise sublime, to equal bliss aspire.

37 Thy sighs no more be wafted by the wind,
38 No more complain, but be to heav'n resign'd.
39 'Twas thine t' unfold the oracles divine,
40 To sooth our woes the task was also thine;
41 Now sorrow is incumbent on thy heart,
42 Permit the muse a cordial to impart;
43 Who can to thee their tend'rest aid refuse?
44 To dry thy tears how longs the heav'nly muse!

An HYMN to the MORNING.

1 ATTEND my lays, ye ever honour'd nine,
2 Assist my labours, and my strains refine;
3 In smoothest numbers pour the notes along,
4 For bright *Aurora* now demands my song.

5 *Aurora* hail, and all the thousands dies,
6 Which deck thy progress through the vaulted skies:
7 The morn awakes, and wide extends her rays,
8 On ev'ry leaf the gentle zephyr plays;
9 Harmonious lays the feather'd race resume,
10 Dart the bright eye, and shake the painted plume.

11 Ye shady groves, your verdant gloom display
12 To shield your poet from the burning day:
13 *Calliope* awake the sacred lyre,
14 While thy fair sisters fan the pleasing fire:

15 The bow'rs, the gales, the variegated skies
16 In all their pleasures in my bosom rise.

17 See in the east th' illustrious king of day!
18 His rising radiance drives the shades away --
19 But Oh! I feel his fervid beams too strong,
20 And scarce begun, concludes th' abortive song.

An HYMN to the EVENING.

- 1 SOON as the sun forsook the eastern main
- 2 The pealing thunder shook the heav'nly plain;
- 3 Majestic grandeur! From the zephyr's wing,
- 4 Exhales the incense of the blooming spring.
- 5 Soft purl the streams, the birds renew their notes,
- 6 And through the air their mingled music floats.

- 7 Through all the heav'ns what beauteous dies are spread!
- 8 But the west glories in the deepest red:
- 9 So may our breasts with ev'ry virtue glow,
- 10 The living temples of our God below!

- 11 Fill'd with the praise of him who gives the light,
- 12 And draws the sable curtains of the night,

- 13 Let placid slumbers sooth each weary mind,
- 14 At morn to wake more heav'nly, more refin'd,
- 15 So shall the labours of the day begin
- 16 More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.

- 17 Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes,
- 18 Then cease, my song, till fair *Aurora* rise.

ISAIAH lxiii. I-8.

1 SAY, heav'nly muse, what king or mighty God,
2 That moves sublime from *Idumea's* road?
3 In *Bozrah's* dies, with martial glories join'd,
4 His purple vesture waves upon the wind.
5 Why thus enrob'd delights he to appear
6 In the dread image of the *Pow'r* of war?

7 Compress'd in wrath the swelling wine-press groan'd,
8 It bled, and pour'd the gushing purple round.

9 "Mine was the act," th' Almighty Saviour said,
10 And shook the dazzling glories of his head,
11 "When all forsook I trod the press alone,
12 "And conquer'd by omnipotence my own;
13 "For man's release sustain'd the pond'rous load,
14 "For man the wrath of an immortal God:

15 "To execute th' Eternal's dread command
16 "My soul I sacrific'd with willing hand;
17 "Sinless I stood before the avenging frown,
18 "Atoning thus for vices not my own."

19 His eye the ample field of battle round
20 Survey'd, but no created succours found;
21 His own omnipotence sustain'd the fight,
22 His vengeance sunk the haughty foes in night;
23 Beneath his feet the prostrate troops were spread,
24 And round him lay the dying, and the dead.

25 Great God, what light'ning flashes from thine eyes?
26 What pow'r withstands if thou indignant rise?

27 Against thy *Zion* though her foes may rage,
28 And all their cunning, all their strength engage,
29 Yet she serenely on thy bosom lies,
30 Smiles at their arts, and all their force defies.

On RECOLLECTION.

1 MNEME begin. Inspire, ye sacred nine,
2 Your vent'rous *Afric* in her great design.
3 *Mneme*, immortal pow'r, I trace thy spring:
4 Assist my strains, while I thy glories sing:
5 The acts of long departed years, by thee
6 Recover'd, in due order rang'd we see:
7 Thy pow'r the long-forgotten calls from night,
8 That sweetly plays before the *fancy's* sight.

9 *Mneme* in our nocturnal visions pours
10 The ample treasure of her secret stores;
11 Swift from above she wings her silent flight
12 Through *Phoebe's* realms, fair regent of the night;
13 And, in her pomp of images display'd,
14 To the high-raptur'd poet gives her aid,
15 Through the unbounded regions of the mind,
16 Diffusing light celestial and refin'd.

17 The heav'nly *phantom* paints the actions done
18 By ev'ry tribe beneath the rolling sun.

19 *Mneme*, enthron'd within the human breast,
20 Has vice condemn'd, and ev'ry virtue blest.
21 How sweet the sound when we her plaudit hear?
22 Sweeter than music to the ravish'd ear,
23 Sweeter than *Maro's* entertaining strains
24 Resounding through the groves, and hills, and plains.
25 But how is *Mneme* dreaded by the race,
26 Who scorn her warnings, and despise her grace?
27 By her unveil'd each horrid crime appears,
28 Her awful hand a cup of wormwood bears.
29 Days, years mispent, O what a hell of woe!
30 Hers the worst tortures that our souls can know.

31 Now eighteen years their destin'd course have run,
32 In fast succession round the central sun.
33 How did the follies of that period pass
34 Unnotic'd, but behold them writ in brass!

35 In Recollection see them fresh return,
36 And sure 'tis mine to be asham'd, and mourn.

37 O *Virtue* , smiling in immortal green,
38 Do thou exert thy pow'r, and change the scene;
39 Be thine employ to guide my future days,
40 And mine to pay the tribute of my praise.

41 Of *Recollection* such the pow'r enthron'd
42 In ev'ry breast, and thus her pow'r is own'd.
43 The wretch, who dar'd the vengeance of the skies,
44 At last awakes in horror and surprise,
45 By her alarm'd, he sees impending fate,
46 He howls in anguish, and repents too late.
47 But O! what peace, what joys are hers t' impart
48 To ev'ry holy, ev'ry upright heart!
49 Thrice blest the man, who, in her sacred shrine,
50 Feels himself shelter'd from the wrath divine!

On IMAGINATION.

1 THY various works, imperial queen, we see,
2 How bright their forms! how deck'd with pomp by thee!
3 Thy wond'rous acts in beauteous order stand,
4 And all attest how potent is thine hand.

5 From *Helicon's* refulgent heights attend,
6 Ye sacred choir, and my attempts befriend:
7 To tell her glories with a faithful tongue,
8 Ye blooming graces, triumph in my song.

9 Now here, now there, the roving *Fancy* flies,
10 Till some lov'd object strikes her wand'ring eyes,
11 Whose silken fetters all the senses bind,
12 And soft captivity involves the mind.

13 *Imagination!* who can sing thy force?
14 Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?
15 Soaring through air to find the bright abode,
16 Th' empyreal palace of the thund'ring God,
17 We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,
18 And leave the rolling universe behind:
19 From star to star the mental optics rove,
20 Measure the skies, and range the realms above.
21 There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,
22 Or with new worlds amaze th' unbounded soul.

23 Though *Winter* frowns to *Fancy's* raptur'd eyes
24 The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;
25 The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,
26 And bid their waters murmur o'er the sands.
27 Fair *Flora* may resume her fragrant reign,
28 And with her flow'ry riches deck the plain;
29 *Sylvanus* may diffuse his honours round,
30 And all the forest may with leaves be crown'd:

31 Show'rs may descend, and dews their gems disclose,
32 And nectar sparkle on the blooming rose.

33 Such is thy pow'r, nor are thine orders vain,
34 O thou the leader of the mental train:
35 In full perfection all thy works are wrought,
36 And thine the sceptre o'er the realms of thought.
37 Before thy throne the subject-passions bow,
38 Of subject-passions sov'reign ruler Thou;
39 At thy command joy rushes on the heart,
40 And through the glowing veins the spirits dart.

41 *Fancy* might now her silken pinions try
42 To rise from earth, and sweep th' expanse on high;
43 From *Tithon's* bed now might *Aurora* rise,
44 Her cheeks all glowing with celestial dies,
45 While a pure stream of light o'erflows the skies.
46 The monarch of the day I might behold,
47 And all the mountains tipt with radiant gold,

- 68 -

48 But I reluctant leave the pleasing views,
49 Which *Fancy* dresses to delight the *Muse*;
50 *Winter* austere forbids me to aspire,
51 And northern tempests damp the rising fire;
52 They chill the tides of *Fancy's* flowing sea,
53 Cease then, my song, cease the unequal lay.

A Funeral POEM on the Death of C. E. an Infant of Twelve Months.

1 THROUGH airy roads he wings his instant flight
2 To purer regions of celestial light;
3 Enlarg'd he sees unnumber'd systems roll,
4 Beneath him sees the universal whole,
5 Planets on planets run their destin'd round,
6 And circling wonders fill the vast profound.
7 Th' ethereal now, and now th' empyreal skies
8 With growing splendors strike his wond'ring eyes:
9 The angels view him with delight unknown,
10 Press his soft hand, and seat him on his throne;
11 Then smiling thus. "To this divine abode,
12 "The seat of saints, of seraphs, and of God,
13 "Thrice welcome thou." The raptur'd babe replies,
14 "Thanks to my God, who snatch'd me to the skies,

- 70 -

15 "E'er vice triumphant had possess'd my heart,
16 "E'er yet the tempter had beguil'd my heart,
17 "E'er yet on sin's base actions I was bent,
18 "E'er yet I knew temptation's dire intent;
19 "E'er yet the lash for horrid crimes I felt,
20 "E'er vanity had led my way to guilt,
21 "But, soon arriv'd at my celestial goal,
22 "Full glories rush on my expanding soul."
23 Joyful he spoke: exulting cherubs round
24 Clapt their glad wings, the heav'nly vaults resound.

25 Say, parents, why this unavailing moan?
26 Why heave your pensive bosoms with the groan?
27 To *Charles* , the happy subject of my song,
28 A brighter world, and nobler strains belong.
29 Say would you tear him from the realms above
30 By thoughtless wishes, and prepost'rous love?
31 Doth his felicity increase your pain?
32 Or could you welcome to this world again
33 The heir of bliss? with a superior air
34 Methinks he answers with a smile severe,
35 "Thrones and dominions cannot tempt me there."

- 71 -

36 But still you cry, "Can we the sigh forbear,
37 "And still and still must we not pour the tear?
38 "Our only hope, more dear than vital breath,
39 "Twelve moons revolv'd, becomes the prey of death;
40 "Delightful infant, nightly visions give
41 "Thee to our arms, and we with joy receive,
42 "We fain would clasp the *Phantom* to our breast,
43 "The *Phantom* flies, and leaves the soul unblest."

44 To yon bright regions let your faith ascend,
45 Prepare to join your dearest infant friend
46 In pleasures without measure, without end.

To Captain H----D, of the 65th Regiment.

- 1 SAY, muse divine, can hostile scenes delight
- 2 The warrior's bosom in the fields of fight?
- 3 Lo! here the christian and the hero join
- 4 With mutual grace to form the man divine.
- 5 In H----D see with pleasure and surprize,
- 6 Where *valour* kindles, and where *virtue* lies:
- 7 Go, hero brave, still grace the post of fame,
- 8 And add new glories to thine honour'd name,
- 9 Still to the field, and still to virtue true:
- 10 *Britannia* glories in no son like you.

To the Right Honourable WILLIAM, Earl of DARTMOUTH, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for North America, &c.

1 HAIL, happy day, when, smiling like the morn,
2 Fair *Freedom* rose *New-England* to adorn:
3 The northern clime beneath her genial ray,
4 *Dartmouth* , congratulates thy blissful sway:
5 Elate with hope her race no longer mourns,
6 Each soul expands, each grateful bosom burns,
7 While in thine hand with pleasure we behold
8 The silken reins, and *Freedom's* charms unfold.
9 Long lost to realms beneath the northern skies
10 She shines supreme, while hated *faction* dies:
11 Soon as appear'd the *Goddess* long desir'd,
12 Sick at the view, she languish'd and expir'd;
13 Thus from the splendors of the morning light
14 The owl in sadness seeks the caves of night.

No more, *America* , in mournful strain
15 Of wrongs, and grievance unredress'd complain,
16 No longer shall thou dread the iron chain,
17 Which wanton *Tyranny* with lawless hand
18 Had made, and with it meant t' enslave the land.

Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
19 Wonder from whence my love of *Freedom* sprung,
20 Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
21 By feeling hearts alone best understood,
22 I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
23 Was snatch'd from *Afric's* fancy'd happy seat:
24 What pangs excruciating must molest,
25 What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
26 Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
27 That from a father seiz'd his babe below'd:
28 Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
29 Others may never feel tyrannic sway?

For favours past, great Sir, our thanks are due,
30 And thee we ask thy favours to renew,

31 Since in thy pow'r, as in thy will before,
32 To sooth the griefs, which thou did'st once deplore.
33 May heav'nly grace the sacred sanction give
34 To all thy works, and thou for ever live
35 Not only on the wings of fleeting *Fame* ,
36 Though praise immortal crowns the patriot's name,
37 But to conduct to heav'ns refulgent fane,
38 May fiery coursers sweep th' ethereal plain,
39 And bear thee upwards to that blest abode,
40 Where, like the prophet, thou shalt find thy God.

ODE TO NEPTUNE.

On Mrs. W--'s Voyage to England.

I.

1 WHILE raging tempests shake the shore,
2 While *AE'lus'* thunders round us roar,
3 And sweep impetuous o'er the plain
4 Be still, O tyrant of the main;
5 Nor let thy brow contracted frowns betray,
6 While my *Susannah* skims the wat'ry way.

II.

7 The *Pow'r* propitious hears the lay,
8 The blue-ey'd daughters of the sea
9 With sweeter cadence glide along,
10 And *Thames* responsive joins the song.
11 Pleas'd with their notes *Sol* sheds benign his ray,
12 And double radiance decks the face of day.

III.

13 To court thee to *Britannia's* arms
14 Serene the climes and mild the sky,
15 Her region boasts unnumber'd charms,
16 Thy welcome smiles in ev'ry eye.
17 Thy promise, *Neptune* keep, record my pray'r,
18 Nor give my wishes to the empty air.

Boston, October 10, 1772.

To a LADY on her coming to North-America with her Son, for the Recovery of her Health.

1 INdulgent muse! my grov'ling mind inspire,
2 And fill my bosom with celestial fire.

3 See from *Jamaica's* fervid shore she moves,
4 Like the fair mother of the blooming loves,
5 When from above the *Goddess* with her hand
6 Fans the soft breeze, and lights upon the land;
7 Thus she on *Neptune's* wat'ry realm reclin'd
8 Appear'd, and thus invites the ling'ring wind.

9 "Arise, ye winds, *America* explore,
10 "Waft me, ye gales, from this malignant shore;
11 "The *Northern* milder climes I long to greet,
12 "There hope that health will my arrival meet."
13 Soon as she spoke in my ideal view
14 The winds assented, and the vessel flew.

15 Madam, your spouse bereft of wife and son,
16 In the grove's dark recesses pours his moan;
17 Each branch, wide-spreading to the ambient sky,
18 Forgets its verdure, and submits to die.

19 From thence I turn, and leave the sultry plain,
20 And swift pursue thy passage o'er the main:
21 The ship arrives before the fav'ring wind,
22 And makes the *Philadelphian* port assign'd,
23 Thence I attend you to *Bostonia's* arms,
24 Where gen'rous friendship ev'ry bosom warms:
25 Thrice welcome here! may health revive again,
26 Bloom on thy cheek, and bound in ev'ry vein!
27 Then back return to gladden ev'ry heart,
28 And give your spouse his soul's far dearer part,
29 Receiv'd again with what a sweet surprize,
30 The tear in transport starting from his eyes!
31 While his attendant son with blooming grace
32 Springs to his father's ever dear embrace.
33 With shouts of joy *Jamaica's* rocks resound,
34 With shouts of joy the country rings around.

To a LADY on her remarkable Preservation in an Hurricane in *North-Carolina*.

1 THOUGH thou did'st hear the tempest from afar,
2 And felt'st the horrors of the wat'ry war,
3 To me unknown, yet on this peaceful shore
4 Methinks I hear the storm tumultuous roar,
5 And how stern *Boreas* with impetuous hand
6 Compell'd the *Nereids* to usurp the land.
7 Reluctant rose the daughters of the main,
8 And slow ascending glided o'er the plain,
9 Till *AEolus* in his rapid chariot drove
10 In gloomy grandeur from the vault above:
11 Furious he comes. His winged sons obey
12 Their frantic sire, and madden all the sea.
13 The billows rave, the wind's fierce tyrant roars,
14 And with his thund'ring terrors shakes the shores:
15 Broken by waves the vessel's frame is rent,
16 And strows with planks the wat'ry element.

17 But thee, *Maria*, a kind *Nereid's* shield
18 Preserv'd from sinking, and thy form upheld:
19 And sure some heav'nly oracle design'd
20 At that dread crisis to instruct thy mind
21 Things of eternal consequence to weigh,
22 And to thine heart just feelings to convey
23 Of things above, and of the future doom,
24 And what the births of the dread world to come.
25 From tossing seas I welcome thee to land.
26 "Resign her, *Nereid*," 'twas thy God's command.
27 Thy spouse late buried, as thy fears conceiv'd,
28 Again returns, thy fears are all reliev'd:
29 Thy daughter blooming with superior grace
30 Again thou see'st, again thine arms embrace;
31 O come, and joyful show thy spouse his heir,
32 And what the blessings of maternal care!

To a LADY and her Children, on the Death of her Son and their Brother.

1 O'Erwhelming sorrow now demands my song:
2 From death the overwhelming sorrow sprung.
3 What flowing tears? What hearts with grief opprest?
4 What sighs on sighs heave the fond parent's breast?
5 The brother weeps, the hapless sisters join
6 Th' increasing woe, and swell the crystal brine;
7 The poor, who once his gen'rous bounty fed,
8 Droop, and bewail their benefactor dead.
9 In death the friend, the kind companion lies,
10 And in one death what various comfort dies!

11 Th' unhappy mother sees the sanguine rill
12 Forget to flow, and nature's wheels stand still,
13 But see from earth his spirit far remov'd,
14 And know no grief recals your best-belov'd:

15 He, upon pinions swifter than the wind,
16 Has left mortality's sad scenes behind
17 For joys to this terrestrial state unknown,
18 And glories richer than the monarch's crown.
19 Of virtue's steady course the prize behold!
20 What blissful wonders to his mind unfold!
21 But of celestial joys I sing in vain:
22 Attempt not, muse, the too advent'rous strain.

23 No more in briny show'rs, ye friends around,
24 Or bathe his clay, or waste them on the ground:
25 Still do you weep, still wish for his return?
26 How cruel thus to wish, and thus to mourn?
27 No more for him the streams of sorrow pour,
28 But haste to join him on the heav'nly shore,
29 On harps of gold to tune immortal lays,
30 And to your God immortal anthems raise.

To a GENTLEMAN and LADY on the Death of the Lady's Brother and Sister, and a Child of the Name *Avis* , aged one Year.

1 ON *Death's* domain intent I fix my eyes,
2 Where human nature in vast ruin lies,
3 With pensive mind I search the drear abode,
4 Where the great conqu'ror has his spoils bestow'd;
5 There there the offspring of six thousand years
6 In endless numbers to my view appears:
7 Whole kingdoms in his gloomy den are thrust,
8 And nations mix with their primeval dust:
9 Insatiate still he gluts the ample tomb;
10 His is the present, his the age to come
11 See here a brother, here a sister spread,
12 And a sweet daughter mingled with the dead.

13 But, *Madam* , let your grief be laid aside,
14 And let the fountain of your tears be dry'd,
15 In vain they flow to wet the dusty plain,
16 Your sighs are wafted to the skies in vain,

17 Your pains they witness, but they can no more,
18 While *Death* reigns tyrant o'er this mortal shore.

The glowing stars and silver queen of light
19 At last must perish in the gloom of night:
20 Resign thy friends to that Almighty hand,
21 Which gave them life, and bow to his command;
22 Thine *Avis* give without a murm'ring heart,
23 Though half thy soul be fated to depart.
24 To shining guards consign thine infant care
25 To waft triumphant through the seas of air:
26 Her soul enlarg'd to heav'nly pleasure springs,
27 She feeds on truth and uncreated things.
28 Methinks I hear her in the realms above,
29 And leaning forward with a filial love,
30 Invite you there to share immortal bliss
31 Unknown, untasted in a state like this.
32 With tow'ring hopes, and growing grace arise,
33 And seek beatitude beyond the skies.

On the Death of Dr. SAMUEL MARSHALL.

1771.

1 THROUGH thickest glooms look back, immortal shade,
2 On that confusion which thy death has made;
3 Or from *Olympus'* height look down, and see
4 A *Town* involv'd in grief bereft of thee.
5 Thy *Lucy* sees thee mingle with the dead,
6 And rends the graceful tresses from her head,
7 Wild in her woe, with grief unknown opprest
8 Sigh follows sigh deep heaving from her breast.

9 Too quickly fled, ah! whither art thou gone?
10 Ah! lost for ever to thy wife and son!
11 The hapless child, thine only hope and heir,
12 Clings round his mother's neck, and weeps his sorrows there.
13 The loss of thee on *Tyler's* soul returns,
14 And *Boston* for her dear physician mourns.

- 87 -

15 When sickness call'd for *Marshall's* healing hand,
16 With what compassion did his soul expand?
17 In him we found the father and the friend:
18 In life how lov'd! how honour'd in his end!

19 And must not then our *AEsculapius* stay
20 To bring his ling'ring infant into day?
21 The babe unborn in the dark womb is tost,
22 And seems in anguish for its father lost.

23 Gone is *Apollo* from his house of earth,
24 But leaves the sweet memorials of his worth:
25 The common parent, whom we all deplore,
26 From yonder world unseen must come no more,
27 Yet 'midst our woes immortal hopes attend
28 The spouse, the sire, the universal friend.

To a GENTLEMAN on his Voyage to *Great-Britain* for the Recovery of his Health.

1 WHILE others chant of gay *Elysian* scenes,
2 Of balmy zephyrs, and of flow'ry plains,
3 My song more happy speaks a greater name,
4 Feels higher motives and a nobler flame.
5 For thee, OR --, the muse attunes her strings,
6 And mounts sublime above inferior things.

7 I sing not now of green embow'ring woods,
8 I sing not now the daughters of the floods,
9 I sing not of the storms o'er ocean driv'n,
10 And how they howl'd along the waste of heav'n.
11 But I to R -- would paint the *British* shore,
12 And vast *Atlantic* , not untry'd before:
13 Thy life impair'd commands thee to arise,
14 Leave these bleak regions and inclement skies,
15 Where chilling winds return the winter past,
16 And nature shudders at the furious blast.

17 O thou stupendous, earth-enclosing main
18 Exert thy wonders to the world again!
19 If ere thy pow'r prolong'd the fleeting breath,
20 Turn'd back the shafts, and mock'd the gates of death,
21 If ere thine air dispens'd an healing pow'r,
22 Or snatch'd the victim from the fatal hour,
23 This equal case demands thine equal care,
24 And equal wonders may this patient share.
25 But unavailing, frantic is the dream
26 To hope thine aid without the aid of him
27 Who gave thee birth, and taught thee where to flow,
28 And in thy waves his various blessings show.

29 May R-- return to view his native shore
30 Replete with vigour not his own before,
31 Then shall we see with pleasure and surprize,
32 And own thy work, great Ruler of the skies!

To the Rev. DR. THOMAS AMORY on reading his Sermons on
DAILY DEVOTION, in which that Duty is recommended and assisted.

1 TO cultivate in ev'ry noble mind
2 Habitual grace, and sentiments refin'd,
2 Thus while you strive to mend the human heart,
2 Thus while the heav'nly precepts you impart,
2 O may each bosom catch the sacred fire,
2 And youthful minds to Virtue's throne aspire!

2 When God's eternal ways you set in sight,
2 And Virtue shines in all her native light,
2 In vain would Vice her works in night conceal,
2 For Wisdom's eye pervades the sable veil.

2 Artists may paint the sun's effulgent rays,
2 But Amory's pen the brighter God displays:
2 While his great works in Amory's pages shine,
2 And while he proves his essence all divine,

2 The Atheist sure no more can boast aloud
2 Of chance, or nature, and exclude the God;
2 As if the clay without the potter's aid
2 Should rise in various forms, and shapes self-made,
2 Or worlds above with orb o'er orb profound
2 Self-mov'd could run the everlasting round.
2 It cannot be unerring Wisdom guides
2 With eye propitious, and o'er all presides.

2 Still prosper, Amory! still may'st thou receive
2 The warmest blessings which a muse can give,
2 And when this transitory state is o'er,
2 When kingdoms fall, and fleeting Fame's no more,
2 May Amory triumph in immortal fame,
2 A nobler title, and superior name!

On the Death of J. C. an Infant.

1 NO more the flow'ry scenes of pleasure rise,
2 Nor charming prospects greet the mental eyes,
3 No more with joy we view that lovely face
4 Smiling, disportive, flush'd with ev'ry grace.

5 The tear of sorrow flows from ev'ry eye,
6 Groans answer groans, and sighs to sighs reply;
7 What sudden pangs shot thro' each aching heart,
8 When, *Death* , thy messenger dispatch'd his dart?
9 Thy dread attendants, all-destroying *Pow'r* ,
10 Hurried the infant to his mortal hour.
11 Could'st thou unpitying close those radiant eyes?
12 Or fail'd his artless beauties to surprize?
13 Could not his innocence thy stroke controul,
14 Thy purpose shake, and soften all thy soul?

15 The blooming babe, with shades of *Death* o'erspread,
16 No more shall smile, no more shall raise its head,
17 But, like a branch that from the tree is torn,
18 Falls prostrate, wither'd, languid, and forlorn.
19 "Where flies my *James* ?" 'tis thus I seem to hear
20 The parent ask, "Some angel tell me where
21 "He wings his passage thro' the yielding air?"
22 Methinks a cherub bending from the skies
23 Observes the question, and serene replies,
24 "In heav'n's high palaces your babe appears:
25 "Prepare to meet him, and dismiss your tears."
26 Shall not th' intelligence your grief restrain,
27 And turn the mournful to the chearful strain?
28 Cease your complaints, suspend each rising sigh,
29 Cease to accuse the Ruler of the sky.
30 Parents, no more indulge the falling tear:
31 Let *Faith* to heav'n's refulgent domes repair,
32 There see your infant, like a seraph glow:
33 What charms celestial in his numbers flow

34 Melodious, while the soul-enchancing strain
35 Dwells on his tongue, and fills th' ethereal plain?

36 Enough -- for ever cease your murm'ring breath;
37 Not as a foe, but friend converse with *Death* ,
38 Since to the port of happiness unknown
39 He brought that treasure which you call your own.
40 The gift of heav'n intrusted to your hand
41 Chearful resign at the divine command:
42 Not at your bar must sov'reign *Wisdom* stand.

An HYMN to HUMANITY.

To S. P. G. Esq;

I.

1 LO! for this dark terrestrial ball
2 Forsakes his azure-paved hall
3 A prince of heav'nly birth!
4 Divine *Humanity* behold.
5 What wonders rise, what charms unfold
6 At his descent to earth!

II.

7 The bosoms of the great and good
8 With wonder and delight he view'd,
9 And fix'd his empire there:
10 Him, close compressing to his breast,
11 The sire of gods and men address'd,
12 "My son, my heav'nly fair!

- 96 -

III.

13 "Descend to earth, there place thy throne;
14 "To succour man's afflicted son
15 "Each human heart inspire:
16 "To act in bounties unconfin'd
17 "Enlarge the close contracted mind,
18 "And fill it with thy fire."

IV.

19 Quick as the word, with swift career
20 He wings his course from star to star,
21 And leaves the bright abode.
22 The *Virtue* did his charms impart;
23 Their G--y! then thy raptur'd heart
24 Perceiv'd the rushing God:

V.

25 For when thy pitying eye did see
26 The languid muse in low degree,
27 Then, then at thy desire
28 Descended the celestial nine;
29 O'er me methought they deign'd to shine,
30 And deign'd to string my lyre.

- 97 -

VI.

31 Can *Afric's* muse forgetful prove?
32 Or can such friendship fail to move
33 A tender human heart?
34 Immortal *Friendship* laurel-crown'd
35 The smiling *Graces* all surround
36 With ev'ry heav'nly *Art* .

To the Honourable T. H. Esq; on the Death of his Daughter.

1 WHILE deep you mourn beneath the cypress-shade
2 The hand of Death, and your dear daughter laid
3 In dust, whose absence gives your tears to flow,
4 And racks your bosom with incessant woe,
5 Let *Recollection* take a tender part,
6 Assuage the raging tortures of your heart,
7 Still the wild tempest of tumultuous grief,
8 And pour the heav'nly nectar of relief:
9 Suspend the sigh, dear Sir, and check the groan,
10 Divinely bright your daughter's *Virtues* shone:
11 How free from scornful pride her gentle mind,
12 Which ne'er its aid to indigence declin'd!
13 Expanding free, it sought the means to prove
14 Unfailing charity, unbounded love!

15 She reluctant flies to see no more
16 Her dear-lov'd parents on earth's dusky shore:

17 Impatient heav'n's resplendent goal to gain,
18 She with swift progress cuts the azure plain,
19 Where grief subsides, where changes are no more,
20 And life's tumultuous billows cease to roar;
21 She leaves her earthly mansion for the skies,
22 Where new creations feast her wond'ring eyes.

23 To heav'n's high mandate chearfully resign'd
24 She mounts, and leaves the rolling globe behind;
25 She, who late wish'd that *Leonard* might return,
26 Has ceas'd to languish, and forgot to mourn;
27 To the same high empyreal mansions come,
28 She joins her spouse, and smiles upon the tomb:
29 And thus I hear her from the realms above:
30 "Lo! this the kingdom of celestial love!
31 "Could ye, fond parents, see our present bliss,
32 "How soon would you each sigh, each fear dismiss?
33 "Amidst unutter'd pleasures whilst I play
34 "In the fair sunshine of celestial day,
35 "As far as grief affects an happy soul
36 "So far doth grief my better mind controul,

37 "To see on earth my aged parents mourn,
38 "And secret wish for T--l to return:
39 "Let brighter scenes your ev'ning-hours employ:
40 "Converse with heav'n, and taste the promis'd joy."

NIOBE in Distress for her Children slain by APOLLO, from *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Book VI. and from a view of the Painting of Mr. *Richard Wilson*.

1 APOLLO's wrath to man the dreadful spring
2 Of ills innum'rous, tuneful goddess, sing!
3 Thou who did'st first th' ideal pencil give,
4 And taught'st the painter in his works to live,
5 Inspire with glowing energy of thought,
6 What *Wilson* painted, and what *Ovid* wrote.
7 Muse! lend thy aid, nor let me sue in vain,
8 Tho' last and meanest of the rhyming train!
9 O guide my pen in lofty strains to show
10 The *Phrygian* queen, all beautiful in woe.

11 'Twas where *Maeonia* spreads her wide domain
12 *Niobe* dwelt, and held her potent reign:
13 See in her hand the regal sceptre shine,
14 The wealthy heir of *Tantalus* divine,

15 He most distinguish'd by *Dodonean Jove* ,
16 To approach the tables of the gods above:
17 Her grandsire *Atlas* , who with mighty pains
18 Th' ethereal axis on his neck sustains:
19 Her other gran sire on the throne on high
20 Rolls the loud-pealing thunder thro' the sky.

21 Her spouse, *Amphion* , who from *Jove* too springs,
22 Divinely taught to sweep the sounding strings.

23 Seven sprightly sons the royal bed adorn,
24 Seven daughters beauteous as the op'ning morn,
25 As when *Aurora* fills the ravish'd sight,
26 And decks the orient realms with rosy light
27 From their bright eyes the living splendors play,
28 Nor can beholders bear the flashing ray.

29 Wherever, *Niobe* , thou turn'st thine eyes,
30 New beauties kindle, and new joys arise!
31 But thou had'st far the happier mother prov'd,
32 If this fair offspring had been less belov'd:

33 What if their charms exceed *Aurora's* teint,
34 No words could tell them, and no pencil paint,
35 Thy love too vehement hastens to destroy
36 Each blooming maid, and each celestial boy.

37 Now *Manto* comes, endu'd with mighty skill,
38 The past to explore, the future to reveal.
39 Thro' *Thebes'* wide streets *Tiresia's* daughter came,
40 Divine *Latona's* mandate to proclaim:
41 The Theban maids to hear the orders ran,
42 When thus *Maeonia's* prophetess began:

43 "Go, *Thebans!* great *Latona's* will obey,
44 "And pious tribute at her altars pay:
45 "With rights divine, the goddess be implor'd,
46 "Nor be her sacred offspring unador'd."
47 Thus *Manto* spoke. The *Theban* maids obey,
48 And pious tribute to the goddess pay.
49 The rich perfumes ascend in waving spires,
50 And altars blaze with consecrated fires;
51 The fair assembly moves with graceful air,
52 And leaves of laurel bind the flowing hair.

53 *Niobe* comes with all her royal race,
54 With charms unnumber'd, and superior grace:
55 Her *Phrygian* garments of delightful hue,
56 Inwove with gold, refulgent to the view,
57 Beyond description beautiful she moves
58 Like heav'nly Venus, 'midst her smiles and loves:
59 She views around the supplicating train,
60 And shakes her graceful head with stern disdain,
61 Proudly she turns around her lofty eyes,
62 And thus reviles celestial deities:
63 "What madness drives the *Theban* ladies fair
64 "To give their incense to surrounding air?
65 "Say why this new sprung deity preferr'd?
66 "Why vainly fancy your petitions heard?
67 "Or say why *Coeus'* offspring is obey'd,
68 "While to my goddessship no tribute's paid?
69 "For me no altars blaze with living fires,
70 "No bullock bleeds, no frankincense transpires,
71 "Tho' *Cadmus'* palace, not unknown to fame,
72 "And *Phrygian* nations all revere my name.

73 "Where'er I turn my eyes vast wealth I find.
74 "Lo! here an empress with a goddess join'd.
75 "What, shall a *Titaness* be deify'd,
76 "To whom the spacious earth a couch deny'd?
77 "Nor heav'n, nor earth, nor sea receiv'd your queen,
78 "Till pitying *Delos* took the wand'rer in.
79 "Round me what a large progeny is spread!
80 "No frowns of fortune has my soul to dread.
81 "What if indignant she decrease my train
82 "More than *Latona's* number will remain?
83 "Then hence, ye *Theban* dames, hence haste away,
84 "Nor longer offerings to *Latona* pay?
85 "Regard the orders of *Amphion's* spouse,
86 "And take the leaves of laurel from your brows."
87 *Niobe* spoke. The *Theban* maids obey'd,
88 Their brows unbound, and left the rights unpaid.

89 The angry goddess heard, then silence broke
90 On *Cynthus'* summit, and indignant spoke;

91 "*Phoebus!* behold, thy mother in disgrace,
92 "Who to no goddess yields the prior place
93 "Except to *Juno's* self, who reigns above,
94 "The spouse and sister of the thund'ring *Jove* .
95 "*Niobe* , sprung from *Tantalus* , inspires
96 "Each *Theban* bosom with rebellious fires;
97 "No reason her imperious temper quells,
98 "But all her father in her tongue rebels;
99 "Wrap her own sons for her blaspheming breath,
100 "*Apollo!* wrap them in the shades of death."
101 *Latona* ceas'd, and ardent thus replies
102 The God, whose glory decks th' expanded skies.

103 "Cease thy complaints, mine be the task assign'd
104 "To punish pride, and scourge the rebel mind."
105 This *Phoebe* join'd. -- They wing their instant flight;
106 *Thebes* trembled as th' immortal pow'rs alight.

107 With clouds incompass'd glorious *Phoebus* stands;
108 The feather'd vengeance quiv'ring in his hands.

110 Near *Cadmus'* walls a plain extended lay,

111 Where *Thebes'* young princes pass'd in sport the day:
112 There the bold coursers bounded o'er the plains,
113 While their great masters held the golden reins.
114 *Ismenus* first the racing pastime led,
115 And rul'd the fury of his flying steed.
116 "Ah me," he sudden cries, with shrieking breath,
117 While in his breast he feels the shaft of death;
118 He drops the bridle on his courser's mane,
119 Before his eyes in shadows swims the plain,
120 He, the first-born of great *Amphion's* bed,
121 Was struck the first, first mingled with the dead.

122 Then didst thou, *Sipylus*, the language hear
123 Of fate portentous whistling in the air:
124 As when th' impending storm the sailor sees
125 He spreads his canvas to the fav'ring breeze,

- 108 -

126 So to thine horse thou gav'st the golden reins,
127 Gav'st him to rush impetuous o'er the plains:
128 But ah! a fatal shaft from *Phoebus'* hand
129 Smites through thy neck, and sinks thee on the sand.

130 Two other brothers were at *wrestling* found,
131 And in their pastime claspt each other round:
132 A shaft that instant from *Apollo's* hand
133 Transfixt them both, and stretcht them on the sand:
134 Together they their cruel fate bemoan'd,
135 Together languish'd, and together groan'd:
136 Together too th' unbodied spirits fled,
137 And sought the gloomy mansions of the dead.

138 *Alphenor* saw, and trembling at the view,
139 Beat his torn breast, that chang'd its snowy hue.
140 He flies to raise them in a kind embrace;
141 A brother's fondness triumphs in his face:
142 *Alphenor* fails in this fraternal deed,
143 A dart dispatch'd him (so the fates decreed:)

- 109 -

144 Soon as the arrow left the deadly wound,
145 His issuing entrails smoak'd upon the ground.

146 What woes on blooming *Damasichon* wait!
147 His sighs portend his near impending fate.
148 Just where the well-made leg begins to be,

149 And the soft sinews form the supple knee,
150 The youth sore wounded by the *Delian* god
151 Attempts t' extract the crime-avenging rod,
152 But, whilst he strives the will of fate t' avert,
153 Divine *Apollo* sends a second dart;
154 Swift thro' his throat the feather'd mischief flies,
155 Bereft of sense, he drops his head, and dies.

156 Young *Ilioneus*, the last, directs his pray'r,
157 And cries, "My life, ye gods celestial! spare."
158 *Apollo* heard, and pity touch'd his heart,
159 But ah! too late, for he had sent the dart:
160 Thou too, O *Ilioneus*, art doom'd to fall,
161 The fates refuse that arrow to recal.

- 110 -

162 On the swift wings of ever-flying *Fame*
163 To *Cadmus'* palace soon the tidings came:
164 *Niobe* heard, and with indignant eyes
165 She thus express'd her anger and surprize:
166 "Why is such privilege to them allow'd?
167 "Why thus insulted by the *Delian* god?
168 "Dwells there such mischief in the pow'rs above?
169 "Why sleeps the vengeance of immortal *Jove*? "
170 For now *Amphion* too, with grief oppress'd,
171 Had plung'd the deadly dagger in his breast.
172 *Niobe* now, less haughty than before,
173 With lofty head directs her steps no more.
174 She, who late told her pedigree divine,
175 And drove the *Thebans* from *Latona's* shrine,
176 How strangely chang'd! -- yet beautiful in woe,
177 She weeps, nor weeps unpity'd by the foe.
178 On each pale corse the wretched mother spread
179 Lay overwhelm'd with grief, and kiss'd her dead,
180 Then rais'd her arms, and thus, in accents slow,
181 "Be sated cruel *Goddess!* with my woe;

- 111 -

182 "If I've offended, let these streaming eyes,
183 "And let this sev'nfold funeral suffice:
184 "Ah! take this wretched life you deign'd to save,
185 "With them I too am carried to the grave.
186 "Rejoice triumphant, my victorious foe,
187 "But show the cause from whence your triumphs flow?
188 "Tho' I unhappy mourn these children slain,
189 "Yet greater numbers to my lot remain."

190 She ceas'd, the bow-string twang'd with awful sound,
200 Which struck with terror all th' assembly round,
201 Except the queen, who stood unmov'd alone,
202 By her distresses more presumptuous grown.
203 Near the pale corses stood their sisters fair
204 In sable vestures and dishevell'd hair;
205 One, while she draws the fatal shaft away,
206 Faints, falls, and sickens at the light of day.
207 To sooth her mother, lo! another flies,
208 And blames the fury of inclement skies,
209 And, while her words a filial pity show,
210 Struck dumb -- indignant seeks the shades below.

- 112 -

211 Now from the fatal place another flies,
212 Falls in her flight, and languishes, and dies.
213 Another on her sister drops in death;
214 A fifth in trembling terrors yields her breath;
215 While the sixth seeks some gloomy cave in vain,
216 Struck with the rest, and mingl'd with the slain.

217 One only daughter lives, and she the least;
218 The queen close clasp'd the daughter to her breast:
219 "Ye heav'nly pow'rs, ah spare me one," she cry'd,
220 "Ah! spare me one," the vocal hills reply'd:
221 In vain she begs, the *Fates* her suit deny,
222 In her embrace she sees her daughter die.

223 *, ^{auth4} "The queen of all her family bereft,
224 "Without or husband, son, or daughter left,
225 "Grew stupid at the shock. The passing air
226 "Made no impression on her stiff'ning hair.

- 113 -

227 "The blood forsook her face: amidst the flood
228 "Pour'd from her cheeks, quite fix'd her eye-balls stood.
229 "Her tongue, her palate both obdurate grew,
230 "Her curdled veins no longer motion knew;
231 "The use of neck, and arms, and feet was gone,
232 "And ev'n her bowels hard'ned into stone:
233 "A marble statue now the queen appears,
234 "But from the marble steal the silent tears."

To S. M., sm a young *African* Painter, on seeing his Works.

1 TO show the lab'ring bosom's deep intent,
2 And thought in living characters to paint,
3 When first thy pencil did those beauties give,
4 And breathing figures learnt from thee to live,
5 How did those prospects give my soul delight,
6 A new creation rushing on my sight?
7 Still, wond'rous youth! each noble path pursue,
8 On deathless glories fix thine ardent view:
9 Still may the painter's and the poet's fire
10 To aid thy pencil, and thy verse conspire!
11 And may the charms of each seraphic theme
12 Conduct thy footsteps to immortal fame!
13 High to the blissful wonders of the skies
14 Elate thy soul, and raise thy wishful eyes.
15 Thrice happy, when exalted to survey
16 That splendid city, ^{city}, crown'd with endless day,
17 Whose twice six gates on radiant hinges ring:
18 Celestial *Salem* blooms in endless spring.

19 Calm and serene thy moments glide along,
20 And may the muse inspire each future song!
21 Still, with the sweets of contemplation bless'd,
22 May peace with balmy wings your soul invest!
23 But when these shades of time are chas'd away,
24 And darkness ends in everlasting day,
25 On what seraphic pinions shall we move,
26 And view the landscapes in the realms above?
27 There shall thy tongue in heav'nly murmurs flow,
28 And there my muse with heav'nly transport glow:
29 No more to tell of *Damon's* tender sighs, ^{damon},
30 Or rising radiance of *Aurora's* eyes, ^{Aurora},
31 For nobler themes demand a nobler strain,
32 And purer language on th' ethereal plain.
33 Cease, gentle muse! the solemn gloom of night
34 Now seals the fair creation from my sight.

To His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, on the Death of his Lady.

March 24, 1773.

1 ALL-conquering Death! by thy resistless pow'r,
2 Hope's tow'ring plumage falls to rise no more!
3 Of scenes terrestrial how the glories fly,
4 Forget their splendors, and submit to die!
5 Who ere escap'd thee, but the saint *, ^{auth5} of old
6 Beyond the flood in sacred annals told,
7 And the great sage, ±, ^{auth6} whom fiery courses drew
8 To heav'n's bright portals from *Elisha's* view;
9 Wond'ring he gaz'd at the refulgent car,
10 Then snatch'd the mantle floating on the air.
11 From *Death* these only could exemption boast,
12 And without dying gain'd th' immortal coast.
13 Not falling millions sate the tyrant's mind,
14 Nor can the victor's progress be confin'd.
15 But cease thy strife with *Death* , fond *Nature* , cease:
16 He leads the *virtuous* to the realms of peace;

17 His to conduct to the immortal plains,
18 Where heav'n's Supreme in bliss and glory reigns.

19 There sits, illustrious Sir, thy beauteous spouse;
20 A gem-blaz'd circle beaming on her brows.
21 Hail'd with acclaim among the heav'nly choirs,
22 Her soul new-kindling with seraphic fires,
23 To notes divine she tunes the vocal strings,
24 While heav'n's high concave with the music rings.
25 *Virtue's* rewards can mortal pencil paint?
26 No -- all descriptive arts, and eloquence are faint;
27 Nor canst thou, *Oliver* , assent refuse
28 To heav'nly tidings from the *Afric* muse.

29 As soon may change thy laws, eternal *fate* ,
30 As the saint miss the glories I relate;
31 Or her *Benevolence* forgotten lie,
32 Which wip'd the trick'ling tear from *Mis'ry's* eye.
33 Whene'er the adverse winds were known to blow,
34 When loss to loss *, ^{auth7}

Three amiable Daughters who died when just arrived to Womens Estate. [Wheatley's note.]

ensu'd, and woe to woe,

- 118 -

35 Calm and serene beneath her father's hand

36 She sat resign'd to the divine command.

37 No longer then, great Sir, her death deplore,

38 And let us hear the mournful sigh no more,

39 Restrain the sorrow streaming from thine eye,

40 Be all thy future moments crown'd with joy!

41 Nor let thy wishes be to earth confin'd,

42 But soaring high pursue th' unbodied mind.

43 Forgive the muse, forgive th' advent'rous lays,

44 That fain thy soul to heav'nly scenes would raise.

A Farewel to AMERICA.

To Mrs. S. W.

I.

1 ADIEU, *New-England's* smiling meads,
2 Adieu, the flow'ry plain:
3 I leave thine op'ning charms, O spring,
4 And tempt the roaring main.

II.

5 In vain for me the flow'rets rise,
6 And boast their gaudy pride,
7 While here beneath the northern skies
8 I mourn for *health* deny'd.

III.

9 Celestial maid of rosy hue,
10 O let me feel thy reign!
11 I languish till thy face I view,
12 Thy vanish'd joys regain.

IV.

13 *Susannah* mourns, nor can I bear
14 To see the crystal show'r,
15 Or mark the tender falling tear
16 At sad departure's hour;

V.

17 Not unregarding can I see
18 Her soul with grief opprest:
19 But let no sighs, no groans for me,
20 Steal from her pensive breast.

VI.

21 In vain the feather'd warblers sing,
22 In vain the garden blooms,
23 And on the bosom of the spring
24 Breathes out her sweet perfumes

VII.

25 While for *Britannia's* distant shore
26 We sweep the liquid plain,
27 And with astonish'd eyes explore
28 The wide-extended main.

- 121 -

VIII.

29 Lo! *Health* appears! celestial dame!
30 Complacent and serene,
31 With *Hebe's* mantle o'er her Frame,
32 With soul-delighting mein.

IX.

33 To mark the vale where *London* lies
34 With misty vapours crown'd,
35 Which cloud *Aurora's* thousand dyes,

36 And veil her charms around,

X.

37 Why, Phoebus, moves thy car so slow?

38 So slow thy rising ray?

39 Give us the famous town to view,

40 Thou glorious king of day!

XI.

41 For thee, *Britannia*, I resign

42 *New-England's* smiling fields;

43 To view again her charms divine,

44 What joy the prospect yields!

- 122 -

XII.

45 But thou! Temptation hence away,

46 With all thy fatal train

47 Nor once seduce my soul away,

48 By thine enchanting strain.

XIII.

49 Thrice happy they, whose heav'nly shield

50 Secures their souls from harms,

51 And fell *Temptation* on the field

52 Of all its pow'r disarms!

Boston, May 7, 1773.

A REBUS, by I. B., ^{jb}

I.

- 1 A BIRD delicious to the taste,
- 2 On which an army once did feast,
- 3 Sent by an hand unseen;
- 4 A creature of the horned race,
- 5 Which *Britain's* royal standards grace;
- 6 A gem of vivid green;

II.

- 7 A town of gaiety and sport,
- 8 Where beaux and beauteous nymphs resort,
- 9 And gallantry doth reign;
- 10 A *Dardan* hero fam'd of old
- 11 For youth and beauty, as we're told,
- 12 And by a monarch slain;

III.

- 13 A peer of popular applause,
- 14 Who doth our violated laws,
- 15 And grievances proclaim.
- 16 Th' initials show a vanquish'd town,
- 17 That adds fresh glory and renown
- 18 To old *Britannia's* fame.

AN ANSWER to the *Rebus* , by the Author of these POEMS,

1 THE poet asks, and *Phillis* can't refuse
2 To shew th'obedience of the Infant muse.
3 She knows the *Quail* of most inviting taste
4 Fed *Israel's* army in the dreary waste;
5 And what's on *Britain's* royal standard borne,
6 But the tall, graceful, rampant *Unicorn* ?
7 The *Emerald* with a vivid verdure glows
8 Among the gems which regal crowns compose;
9 *Boston's* a town, polite and debonair,
10 To which the beaux and beauteous nymphs repair,
11 Each *Helen* strikes the mind with sweet surprise,
12 While living lightning flashes from her eyes,
13 See young *Euphorbus* of the *Dardan* line
14 By *Menelaus'* hand to death resign:
15 The well known peer of popular applause
16 Is *C--m* zealous to support our laws.
17 *Quebec* now vanquish'd must obey,
18 She too must annual tribute pay
19 To *Britain* of immortal fame,
20 And add new glory to her name.

CONTENTS.

To Maecenas 9 On Virtue 13 To the University of Cambridge, in New-England 15 To the King's Most Excellent Majesty. 1768. 17 On Being Brought from Africa 18 On the Death of the Rev. Dr. Sewell. 1769. 19 On the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield 22 On the Death of a young Lady of five Years of Age 25 On the Death of a young Gentleman 27 To a Lady on the Death of her Husband 29 Goliath of Gath 31 Thoughts on the Works of Providence 43 To a Lady on the Death of three Relations 51 To a Clergyman on the Death of his Lady 53 An Hymn to the Morning 56 An Hymn to the Evening 58

On Isaiah LXIII. 1-8 60 On Recollection 62 On Imagination 65 A Funeral Poem on the Death of an Infant aged twelve Months 69 To Captain H.D., of the 65th Regiment 72 To the Rt. Hon. William, Earl of Dartmouth 73 Ode to Neptune 76 To a Lady on her coming to North America with her Son, for the Recovery of her Health 78 To a Lady on her remarkable Preservation in a Hurricane in North Carolina 80 To a Lady and her Children on the Death of her Son, and their Brother 82 To a Gentleman and Lady on the Death of the Lady's Brother and Sister, and a Child of the Name of *Avis*, aged one Year 84 On the Death of Dr. Samuel Marshall 86 To a Gentleman on his Voyage to Great-Britain, for the Recovery of his Health 88 To the Rev. Dr. Thomas Amory on reading his Sermons on Daily Devotion, in which that Duty is recommended and assisted 90

On the Death of J. C. an Infant 92 An Hymn to Humanity 95 To the Hon. T. H. Esq; on the Death of his Daughter 98 Niobe in Distress for her Children slain by Apollo, from *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Book VI. and from a View of the Painting of Mr. *Richard Wilson* 101 To S. M. a young African Painter, on seeing his Works 114 To his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, on the Death of his Lady 116 A Farewel to America 119 A Rebus by I. B. 123 An Answer to ditto, by *Phillis Wheatley* 124

Footnotes

- occom In Wheatley's letter to Samson Occom, she affirms his "Vindication of their [the enslaved] natural Rights." She concludes with an ellipsis in which she implicitly criticizes the "strange Absurdity" of Christian slavers. To read the letter in its entirety, visit [American Literature I. Samson Occom](#) (1723-1792), a Native American member of the Mohegan Nation, was an author, teacher, judge, and Presbyterian minister. The image here, via Wikimedia Commons, is a mezzotint portrait of the Reverend Occom from 1768.
- [MUStudStaff]
- auth1 The Words "following Page," allude to the Contents of the Manuscript Copy, which are wrote at the Back of the Above Attestation. [Publisher's note]
- maecenasMaecenas was the wealthy patron of classical Roman poets Virgil and Horace, whom Wheatley draws on in complex ways. Wheatley's poem "To Maecenas" opens her collection, which position gives it a powerful significance as she claims the right to speak within this tradition. Like [Horace's Odes to Maecenas](#), Wheatley's offers praise to her patron, but does so in ways that are fraught with the equivocalities of being an enslaved African working within the language and culture of the colonial master. For a deeper reading of "To Maecenas," see Paula Bennett's journal article, "Phillis Wheatley's Vocation and the Paradox of the 'Afric Muse.'" Following other scholars, Bennett identifies Wheatley's poet-patron as Mather Byles, one of the signatories verifying her authorship. The image included here shows the attestation to the public, included in the 1773 edition of Wheatley's poems, certifying that they were indeed written by "PHILLIS, a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since, brought an uncultivated Barbarian from *Africa* ,...and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in [Boston]." Note Bales' name.
- [TH]
- homer Homer is the ancient Greek poet of *The Oddyssey* and *The Illiad* .
- [TH]
- achilles Achilles is the main character of *The Illiad* , which tells the story of the Trojan War and, specifically, Achilles' wrath. Achilles and Patroclus are lovers and friends; angered by Agammemnon, Achilles refuses to fight, but allows Patroclus to wear his armor and lead the Myrmidons against the Trojans. When Patroclus is killed by Hector, Achilles is grief-stricken and, enraged, he returns to battle to destroy the Trojans. The image included here, Gavin Hamilton's *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus* (1760-1763), is housed in [National Galleries, Scotland](#).
- [TH]
- pelides Pelides is Achilles' father; therefore, it is also another way of referring to Achilles himself. Achilles is frequently described as "stern" by Homer.
- [TH]
- maro Publius Vergilius Maro, more commonly known as Virgil, the Augustan Roman poet famed for his Eclogues and the epic poem *The Aeneid* .

- [TH]

nine The nine muses in Greco-Roman mythology are goddesses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne who inspire those in the arts and sciences.

- [TH]

mantua Mantua is a city in Italy, and the home of Virgil; the Mantuan sage is the poet Virgil.

- [TH]

fain Meaning "[g]ladly, willingly, with pleasure," according to the OED (fain, adv.B).

- [TH]

helicon Mount Helicon in Greece is a mountain believed to be the home of the muses and hence a place sacred to poetry.

- [TH]

faltering An alternate spelling and contraction, for meter, of "faltering," meaning unsteady or staggering.

- [TH]

terence Publius Terentius Afer, better known as Terence, is a famous Roman comic playwright, born in northern Africa. As the *Encyclopedia Britannica* notes, Terence was enslaved and later freed by a Roman senator. Wheatley suggests a connection between herself and Terence, both of African origin; yet, Terence is "happier"--both in his poetic skill, and perhaps also in having been freed.

- [TH]

auth2 An *African* by birth. [Wheatley's note.]

laurel The leaves of the bay laurel tree were a conventional symbol of poetic fame and achievement originating in the mythological tale of *Daphne and Apollo*. The image included here is a portrait of the 18th century poet Alexander Pope, wearing a crown of laurel. The portrait (c.1737), by Jonathan Richardson, is housed in the *National Portrait Gallery, London*.

- [TH]

thames The Thames is a major river flowing through southern England and London.

- [TH]

naiads In Greco-Roman mythology, naiads are female freshwater nymphs. The image included here, by Jean-Francois de Troy, shows part of the Ovidian story of Pan and Syrinx (1722-1724). De Troy's *Pan and Syrinx* is housed in the *Getty Museum*.

- [TH]

phoebus Phoebus Apollo is an important god in the Greco-Roman tradition. He is associated with both the sun and with music and poetry.

- [TH]

aurora In Greco-Roman mythology, Aurora (called Eos in the Greek) personifies the dawn.

- [TH]

parnassus Parnassus is a mountain in Greece that was seen as the home of the gods, particularly Dionysus and Apollo, as well as the Muses. The Muses are also associated with Mount Helicon.

- [TH]

cambridge After describing her own educational journey, Wheatley advises students at the University of Cambridge in New England to appreciate and "[i]mprove" (21) the privilege of their education by "shunn[ing]" (25) the "transient sweetness" (29) of sin using a variety of religious images. The University of Cambridge in New England is now known as [Harvard University](#). According to [Katherine Clay Bassard](#), Wheatley wrote this poem when she was about fourteen years old (41). The engraving included here is by Paul Revere and shows "A Westerly View of The Colledges in Cambridge New England" (1767), via NYPL Digital Collections.

- [JW]

ardor Wheatley works from the premise, commonly used among early women writers and the enslaved who were restricted from intellectual pursuits like writing, that her desire to write is "intrinsic" (1) or God-given, and therefore appropriate. The word "ardor" also connotes physical desire and flame-like passion, according to the OED (n.3).

- [JW]

muses According to *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, the Muses are "inspiring goddesses of song" who "presid[e] over the different kinds of poetry, and over the arts and sciences." The "invocation of the muse" to aid the poet's work is often used by neoclassical authors like those whom Wheatley has clearly read and was influenced by, including [Milton](#) and [Pope](#). However, Hilene Flanzbaum suggests that Wheatley's notably frequent invocation of the muse is more significant than formulaic or imitative--it is "the very means by which she usurps power for herself and claims a berth for her own thoughts, emotions and desires. And while some may claim that these functions accompany any appearance of the muse, when the muses bestow their power on a black female slave, they transport Wheatley to a domain surprisingly free of restriction and previously forbidden" ("[Unprecedented Liberties](#)" 75).

- [JW]

egyptian Wheatley here alludes to [Exodus 10:21-22](#), wherein the ninth plague of darkness is visited upon Egypt. This reference is also in line with contemporary Orientalist notions about Egypt and Egyptian religiosity, which was believed to be full of occult practices. Early nineteenth-century British historian and scholar Thomas Maurice explores these ideas of idolatry and superstition in [Observations on the Remains of Ancient Egyptian Grandeur and Superstition](#). A detailed focus on the Egyptian religious practices can be found in the chapter "Strictures on the superstitious rites of the Egyptians, particularly on the Nefarious Worship paid to Beasts, Esteemed Sacred, and called in Scripture the Abominations of Egypt" (74-83).

- [JW]

systems The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century development of the microscope and the telescope had made great scientific advancements possible, especially in astronomy; in the painting by Joseph Wright here, you can see an eighteenth-century orrery--a scientific clockwork instrument used to dramatize the motion of the planets in the solar system (via Wikimedia Commons). Possibly an allusion to Alexander Pope's 1733-34 *Essay on Man* (I.23-28), Wheatley here may also be referencing contemporary scientific thought about the [plurality of worlds](#).

- [JW]

deign According to the Oxford English Dictionary [deign](#) means "to think it worthy of oneself" or "to think fit" (n.1a). Today, it typically has a negative connotation, though it does not here.

- [JW]

ethiop According to the OED, the word [Ethiop](#) would have been used during Wheatley's time most often to refer to "[a] black or dark-skinned person; a black African," and only occasionally to the country of Ethiopia, specifically (n.A). Included here, [via the Norwich Collection at Stanford University](#), is a 1666 map of Africa and the surrounding oceans, embellished with a variety of images.

- [JW]

perdition In theological discussion, the word [perdition](#) means "the state of final spiritual ruin or damnation; the consignment of the unredeemed or wicked and impenitent soul to hell; the fate of those in hell; eternal death" (OED, "perdition" n.2a). In more general terms, it suggests ruin or degradation (n.1a).

- [JW]

auth3 The Repeal of the Stamp Act. [Wheatley's note.]

brought The title of one Wheatley's most (in)famous poems, "On being brought from AFRICA to AMERICA" alludes to the experiences of many Africans who became subject to the [transatlantic slave trade](#). Wheatley uses biblical references and direct address to appeal to a Christian audience, while also defending the ability of her "sable race" to become "refin'd" through Christian theology. Henry Louis Gates, who in *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (1989) situates Wheatley as an important voice in the eighteenth-century debate about natural human rights, summarizes the "recurrent suggestion that Wheatley has remained aloof from matters that were in any sense racial, or more correctly, 'positively' racial," as a "misreading" (74-75). Notable for the complexity of its brief discussion of blackness in the Christian slaveholding American republic, this poem in particular is frequently criticized for its apparent rejection of Africa and African-ness. However, Wheatley was working within a non-free context, and her critique of slavery is mediated by Christianity acquired as part of her enslavement. For a fuller exploration of Wheatley's poem, see [Authority and Female Authorship](#)

[in Colonial America](#) , by William Scheick (especially chapter 4). The image included here, [via the British Library](#), shows a diagram of the Brookes' slave ship (c.1801).

- [JW]

view Wheatley's description of those who "view our sable race with scornful eye" (5) is a clear rejection of what [Lena Hill](#) describes as "ignorant" interpretations of "visual blackness" (37-38), as is her attribution of speech in direct discourse: "'Their color is a diabolic die'" (6). Henry Louis Gates argues that Wheatley's very presence as an author complicated assumptions of "natural" inferiority. For more about this topic, see Gates' *Figures in Black* and Walt Nott's discussion of Wheatley's public persona in "[From 'Uncultivated Barbarian' to 'Poetical Genius': The Public Presence of Phillis Wheatley.](#)"

- [TH]

cain The phrase "black as Cain" is a distortion of the biblical idea of the mark of Cain ([Genesis 4:15](#)) and was used as justification for the enslavement of people of color. Many scholars point out that this was Wheatley's "most maligned poem," ([Hill 37](#)) which is ultimately about the inclusion of Africans in the "Christian family" and her critique of "ignorant" interpretations of "visual blackness" (37-38). For an interesting contemporary read of the mark of Cain in anti-abolitionist discourse, see Josiah Priest's *Slavery as it Relates to the Negro* (1843), where he rejects the possibility that dark-skinned peoples could be related to Adam by blood (134-136). For a larger reading of Wheatley's use of blackness and the role of blackness in the early American imagination, see Lena Hill's chapter "Witnessing Moral Authority in Pre-Abolition Literature," from *Visualizing Blackness and the Creation of the African American Literary Tradition* (2014)

- [JW]

whitfield George Whitefield (1714-1770; pronounced "wit-field") was one of the most famous people of the eighteenth-century Anglophone world. As a student at Oxford in the early 1730s, he got to know John and Charles Wesley, the founders of the Methodist movement in the church of England. Whitefield joined them in attempting to "methodize" the faith, returning it to the simple principles of the early church. But more than the Wesley brothers, Whitefield made this reformist movement into a public ministry. A famously charismatic public speaker, Whitefield preached to crowds numbering in the thousands in England and the American colonies, becoming a central figure in what was known as the "Great Awakening," a revival of evangelical Protestantism that was influential on both sides of the Atlantic. Benjamin Franklin and Olaudah Equiano were each impressed (though in very different ways) when they saw Whitefield preach in Philadelphia and Savannah, respectively. Whitefield made several visits to the Boston area, and it seems likely that the Wheatleys saw him preach there. Phillis might very well have joined them, but we cannot be sure. Whitefield died unexpectedly in Newburyport, Massachusetts on September 30, 1770, a few days after he left Boston on what turned out to be his last tour of the colonies.

Phillis Wheatley's elegy for Whitefield changed her life, transforming her from a young enslaved woman with a small readership among friends of the Wheatley family to an author with an international readership. The poem was published as a broadside on October 11, 1770, and was an immediate success. It was reprinted several times in colonial cities, as well as London, and

also appeared in several newspapers. The poem brought Wheatley to the attention of Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, who is addressed in the poem itself. A fervent Methodist herself, the Countess was Whitefield's patron, supporting him on his evangelical missions. The Countess became Wheatley's patron as well, sponsoring the publication of her only volume of poems, published in London in 1773. The image included here shows a portrait of Whitefield by John Russel, from the National Portrait Gallery, UK.

- [JOB]

wonted wonted: "Accustomed, customary, usual." Oxford English Dictionary; auditory: "An assembly of hearers, an audience." Oxford English Dictionary, hence the meaning here is something like "usual audience."

- [JOB]

unequall'dunequall'd accents"; Whitefield was a famously eloquent and compelling public speaker; the sense here is that no other speaker could match the "accent" or style of his voice.

- [JOB]

zion Zion is a name in the Hebrew bible for Jerusalem, and the term has often been extended to mean the entirety of what believers think of as the holy land, or even the afterlife.

- [JOB]

countess The Countess of *Huntingdon* , to whom Mr. *Whitefield* was Chaplain. [Wheatley's note]. Selina Hastings, the countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), was a major figure in the Methodist movement, using her wealth to support the founding of chapels and a training school for ministers. Whitefield became her personal chaplain in the 1740s. Wheatley sought and recieved her patronage as well, and Wheatley's 1773 volume of poems was published with her support. The image here shows a portrait of Selina Hastings by an unknown artist, about 1770, from the National Portrait Gallery, London.

- [JOB]

orphans Whitefield first came to the American colonies in 1738, when he travelled to Savannah, Georgia, where the colony's trustees had hired him to serve as minister. He decided to make his main project in Savannah the establishment of an orphanage, and he returned to England after only four months to raise money for the project. The Bethesda Orphan House was founded in 1740, and Whitefield continued to raise money and to return for visits to the institution throughout his lifetime.

- [JOB]

auth4 This Verse to the End is ther Work of another Hand. [Wheatley's note.]

sm According to *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* , Scipio Moorhead was an enslaved artist, principally known for his painting of Phillis Wheatley, which became the basis for the frontispiece to her 1773 collection of poems. The frontispiece is included in this database. While no signed paintings by Moorhead survive, this poem by

Wheatley may describe two of his works. Moorhead was owned by the Presbyterian minister John Moorhead of Boston and was likely tutored by Sarah Moorhead ([Appiah and Gates 62](#)).

- [TH]

city Wheatley refers to the heavenly city of "New Jerusalem," described in Revelation 21. As many scholars have noted, Christianity offered a not uncomplicated narrative of salvation and hope that was particularly resonant for the enslaved. She continues this metaphor of future bliss crowning current woe throughout this and other poems; see, for instance, lines 23-28, below.

- [TH]

damon Damon is a typical name for a male lover in pastoral poetry, poetry that imagines romantic conflicts in bucolic or country settings. Wheatley frequently both references and draws on classical pastoral poetry throughout her *Poems* . For a deeper reading of Wheatley's use of the pastoral, see [John C. Shield's scholarly essay, "Phillis Wheatley's Subversive Pastoral."](#)

- [TH]

Aurora In Greco-Roman mythology, Aurora (called Eos in the Greek) personifies the dawn.

- [TH]

auth5 Enoch. [Wheatley's note.]

auth6 Elijah. [Wheatley's note.]

jb Editors of [the Penguin edition of Wheatley's poems](#) reference research that identifies J. B. as James Bowdoin, the future Governor of Massachusetts (185), depicted in this portrait from the [Massachusetts Historical Society](#). Bowdoin was one of the authenticators of Wheatley's collection, his name inscribed in the front matter, as you can see in the image here, taken from the same edition in the Library of Congress.

- [TH]