The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley

Edited with an Essay by
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New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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Till time shall cease; till many a shining world,
Shall fall from Heav'n, in dire confusion hur'd:
Till dying Nature in wild torture lies;
Till her last groans shall rend the brazen skies!
And not till then, his active Soul shall claim,
Its body, now, of more than mortal frame.
But ah! methinks the rolling tears space,
Pursue each other down the alter'd face.
Ahh! cease ye sighs, nor rend the mourner's heart:
Cease thy complaints, no more thy griefs impart.
From the cold shell of his great soul arise!
And look above, thou native of the skies!
There fix thy view, where flutters than the wind
Thy LEONARD flies, and leaves the earth behind.

Thyself prepare to pass the gloomy night,
To join forever in the fields of light;
To thy embrace, his joyful spirit moves,
To thee the partner of his earthly loves;
He welcomes thee to pleasures more refin'd
And better suited to the deathless mind.

[June 1771]

AN ELEGIACT POEM,
ON THE DEATH
OF THAT CELEBRATED DIVINE,
AND EMINENT SERVANT
OF JESUS CHRIST,
The Late Reverend, and Pious
George Whitefield [VARIANT I]

Hail happy Saint on thy immortal throne!
To thee complaints of grievance are unknown;

We hear no more the music of thy tongue,
Thy wonted auditories cease to throng,
Thy lessons in unequal'd accents flow'd!
While emulation in each bosom grow'd;
Thou didst, in strains of eloquence refin'd,
Inflame the soul, and captivate the mind.
Unhappy we, the setting Sun deplore!
Which once was splendid, but it shines no more;
He leaves this earth for Heaven's unmeasur'd height:
And worlds unknown, receive him from our sight;
There WHITEFIELD wings, with rapid course his way,
And sails to Zion, through vast seas of day.

When his AMERICANS were burden'd sore,
When streets were crimson'd with their guiltless gore!
Unrival'd friendship in his breast now strow'd:
The fruit thereof was charity and love.
Towards America—couldst thou do more
Than leave thy native home, the British shore,
To cross the great Atlantic's wat'ry road,
To see America's distressed abode?
Thy prayers, great Saint, and thy incessant cries,
Have pierc'd the bosom of thy native skies!
Thou moon hast seen, and ye bright stars of light
Have witness been of his requests by night!
He pray'd that grace in every heart might dwell:
He long'd to see America excell;
He charg'd its youth to let the grace divine
Arise, and in their future actions shine;
He offer'd THAT he did himself receive,
A greater gift not GOD himself can give:
He urg'd the need of HIM to every one;
It was no less than GOD's co-equal SON!
Take HIM ye wretched for your only good;
Take HIM ye starving souls to be your food.
Ye thirsty, come to his life giving stream:
Ye Preachers, take him for your joyful theme:  
Take HIM, “my dear AMERICANS,” he said,  
Be your complaints in his kind bosom laid:  
Take HIM ye Africans, he longs for you;  
Impartial SAVIOUR, is his title due;  
If you will choose to walk in grace’s road,  
You shall be sons, and kings, and priests to GOD.

Great COUNTESS! we Americans revere  
Thy name, and thus console thy grief sincere:  
We mourn with thee, that TOMB obscurely plac’d,  
In which thy Chaplain undisturbed doth rest.  
New-England sure, doth feel the ORPHAN’s smart;  
Reveals the true sensations of his heart:  
Since this fair Sun, withdraws his golden rays,  
No more to brightness these distressful days!  
His lonely Tabernacle, sees no more  
A WHITEFIELD landing on the British shore:  
Then let us view him in yon azure skies:  
Let every mind with this lov’d object rise.  
No more can he exert his lab’ring breath,  
Seiz’d by the cruel messenger of death.  
What can his dear AMERICA return?  
But drop a tear upon his happy urn,  
Thou tomb, shalt safe retain thy sacred trust,  
Till life divine re-animate his dust.

[October 1770]

AN ODE OF VERSES  
ON THE MUCH-LAMENTED  
DEATH OF THE  
REV. MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD  
[VARIANT II]

HAIL Happy Saint, on thy Immortal Throne!  
To thee Complaints of Grievance are unknown.  
We hear no more the Music of thy Tongue,  
Thy wonted Auditories cease to throng,  
Thy Lessons in unequal’ds Accents flow’d:  
While Emulation in each Bosom glow’d.  
Thou didst, in Strains of Eloquence refin’d,  
Inflame the Soul, and captivate the Mind.  
Unhappy we thy setting Sun deplore,  
Which once was splendid, but it shines no more.  
He leaves the Earth for Heaven’s unmeasur’d Height,  
And Worlds unknown receive him out of Sight.  
There Whitefield wings with rapid Course his Way,  
And sails to Zion thro’ vast Seas of Day.  
When his Americans were burthen’d sore,  
When Streets were crimson’d with their guiltless Gore,  
Wond’rous Compassion in his Breast now strove,  
The Fruit thereof was Charity and Love.  
Towards America what could be more!  
Than leave his native Home, the British Shore,  
To cross the Great Atlantic wat’ry Road,  
To see New England’s much-distruss’ed Abode.  
Thy Prayers, great Saint, and thy incessant Cries,  
Have often pierc’d the Bosom of the Skies.  
Thou, Moon, has seen, and thou, bright Star of Light.  
Hast Witness been of his Requests by Night.  
He pray’d for Grace in e’ry Heart to dwell,  
He long’d to see America excel.
He charg'd its Youth to let the Grace Divine
Arose, and in their future Actions shine.
He offer'd that he did himself receive:
A greater Gift not God himself could give.
He urg'd the Need of Him to ev'ry one,
It was no less than God's co-equal Son.
Take him, ye Wretched, for your only Good;
Take him, ye hungry Souls, to be your Food;
Take him, ye Thirsty, for your cooling Stream;
Ye Preachers, take him for your joyful Theme;
Take him, my dear Americans, he said,
Be your Complaints in his kind Bosom laid;
Take him, ye Africans, he longs for you,
Impartial Saviour is his Title due.
If you will walk in Grace's heavenly Road,
He'll make you free, and Kings, and Priests to God.
No more can he exert his lab'ring Breath,
Seiz'd by the cruel Messenger of Death.
What can his dear America return,
But drop a Tear upon his happy Urn.
Thou, Tomb, shalt safe retain thy sacred Trust,
Till Life Divine reanimate his Dust.
Our Whitefield the Haven has gain'd,
Outflying the Tempest and Wind;
His Rest he has sooner obtain'd,
And left his Companions behind.
With Songs let us follow his Flight,
And mount with his Spirit above;
Escap'd to the Mansions of Light,
And lodg'd in the Eden of Love.

THE CONCLUSION
May Whitefield's Virtues flourish with his Fame,
And Ages yet unborn record his Name.

All Praise and Glory be to God on High,
Whose dread Command is, That we all must die.
To live to Life eternal, may we emulate
The worthy Man that's gone, e'er tis too late.

[October 1770]

ON THE DEATH OF
DOCTOR SAMUEL MARSHALL

Thro' thickest glooms, look back, immortal Shad!
On that confusion which thy flight has made.
Or from Olympus' height look down, and see
A Town involv'd in grief for thee:
His Lucy sees him mix among the dead.
And rends the graceful tresses from her head:
Frantic with woe, with griefs unknown, oppres'd,
Sigh follows sigh, and heaves the downy breast.
Too quickly fled, ah! whither art thou gone:
Ahl lost for ever to thy Wife and Son!
The hapless child, thy only hope and heir,
Clings round her neck, and weeps his sorrows there.
The loss of thee on Tyler's soul returns,
And Boston too, for her Physician mourns.
When sickness call'd for Marshall's kindly hand,
How would his heart expand!
The sire, the friend, in him we oft have found,
With gen'rous friendship did his soul abound.
Could Esculapius then no longer stay?
To bring his ling'ring infant into day!
The babe unborn, in dark confines is toss'd.
And seems in anguish for its father lost.
Gone, is Apollo! from his house of earth,
And leaves the sweet memorials of his worth.