***Poems by [Phillis Wheatley](http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Wheatley/philbio.htm)***

1767-1773?

***On Being Brought From Africa to America***

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

***To S. M., a Young African Painter, On Seeing His Works***

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

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

***On Imagination***

  Thy various works, imperial queen, we see,    
How bright their forms! how deck'd with pomp by thee!    
Thy wond'rous acts in beauteous order stand,    
And all attest how potent is thine hand.    
From Helicon's refulgent heights attend,    
Ye sacred choir, and my attempts befriend:    
To tell her glories with a faithful tongue,    
Ye blooming graces, triumph in my song.    
Now here, now there, the roving *Fancy*flies,    
Till some lov'd objects strikes her wand'ring eyes,    
Whose silken fetters all the senses bind,    
And soft captivity involves the mind.

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

*Winter*frowns to Fancy's raptur'd eyes    
The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;    
The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,    
And bid their waters murmur o'er the sands.    
Fair *Flora*may resume her fragrant reign,    
And with her flow'ry riches deck the plain;    
*Sylvanus*may diffuse his honours round,    
And all the forest may with leaves be crown'd;    
Show'rs may descend, and dews their gems disclose,    
And nectar sparkle on the blooming rose.

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

Fancy might now her silken pinions try    
To rise from earth, and sweep th' expanse on high;    
From*Tithon*'s bed now might *Aurora* rise,    
Her cheeks all glowing with celestial dies,    
While a pure stream of light o'erflows the skies.    
The monarch of the day I might behold,    
And all the mountains tipt with radiant gold,    
But I reluctant leave the pleasing views,    
Which Fancy dresses to delight the Muse;    
*Winter* austere forbids me to aspire,    
And northern tempests damp the rising fire;    
They chill the tides of Fancy's flowing sea,    
Cease then, my song, cease the unequal lay.