

THE POEMS OF

*Phillis Wheatley*

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

*Edited with an Introduction by*

JULIAN D. MASON, JR.

*The University of North Carolina Press  
Chapel Hill & London*

1969



TO HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR, ON THE DEATH  
OF HIS LADY. MARCH 24, 1773.<sup>40</sup>

ALL-conquering Death! by thy restless pow'r,  
Hope's tow'ring plumage falls to rise no more!  
Of scenes terrestrial how the glories fly,  
Forget their splendors, and submit to die!  
Who ere escap'd thee, but the saint\* of old  
Beyond the flood in sacred annals told,  
And the great sage, † whom fiery courses drew  
To heav'n's bright portals from *Elisba's* view;  
Wond'ring he gaz'd at the refulgent car,  
Then snatch'd the mantle floating on the air.  
From *Death* these only could exemption boast,  
And without dying gain'd th' immortal coast.  
Nor falling millions sate the tyrant's mind,  
Nor can the victor's progress be confin'd.  
But cease thy strife with *Death*, fond *Nature*, cease:  
He leads the *virtuous* to the realms of peace;  
His to conduct to the immortal plains,  
Where heav'n's Supreme in bliss and glory reigns.

There sits, illustrious Sir, thy beauteous spouse;  
A gem-blaz'd circle beaming on her brows.  
Hail'd with acclaim among the heav'nly choirs,  
Her soul new-kindling with seraphic fires,  
To notes divine she tunes the vocal strings,  
While heav'n's high concave with the music rings.  
*Virtue's* rewards can mortal pencil paint?  
No—all descriptive arts, and eloquence are faint;

\* Enoch.

† Elijah.

40. This poem was written after the publication of her 1772 Proposals and was a response to the death of Mary Sanford Oliver on March 17. Andrew Oliver was a Harvard graduate (1724) and was appointed provincial secretary in 1756 and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts in 1771. He was primarily a loyalist and was disliked by the patriots. He was one of those who signed the letter "To the PUBLICK" that was printed at the front of her book.

Nor canst thou, *Oliver*, assent refuse  
To heav'nly tidings from the *Afric* muse.

As soon may change thy laws, eternal *Jate*,  
As the saint miss the glories I relate;  
Or her *Benevolence* forgotten lie,  
Which wip'd the trick'ling tear from *Mis'ry's* eye.  
Whene'er the adverse winds were known to blow,  
When loss to loss\* ensu'd, and woe to woe,  
Calm and serene beneath her father's hand  
She sat resign'd to the divine command.

No longer then, great Sir, her death deplore,  
And let us hear the mournful sigh no more,  
Restrain the sorrow streaming from thine eye,  
Be all thy future moments crown'd with joy!  
Nor let thy wishes be to earth confin'd,  
But soaring high pursue th' unbodied mind.  
Forgive the muse, forgive th' advent'rous lays,  
That fain thy soul to heav'nly scenes would raise.

\* Three amiable Daughters who died when just arrived to Womens Estate.

A FAREWEL TO AMERICA. TO MRS. S. W.<sup>41</sup>

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

41. See the variant version of this poem and its note. It was written after the publication of her 1772 Proposals.