



PENGUIN  CLASSICS

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Complete Writings

Too quickly fled, ah! whither art thou gone!
 Ah! lost for ever to thy Wife and Son!
 10 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.
 15 When sickness call'd for *Marshall's* kindly hand,
 Lo! how with pity 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?
 20 To bring his ling'ring infant into day!
 The babe unborn, in dark confines is toss'd
 And seems in anguish for it's father lost.

Gone, is Apollo! from his house of earth,
 And leaves the sweet memorials of his worth.
 25 From yonder world unseen, he comes no more,
 The common parent, whom we thus deplore:
 Yet, in our hopes, immortal joys attend
 The Sire, the Spouse, the universal Friend.

Recollection.

To the AUTHOR of the LONDON MAGAZINE [March 1772].

Boston, in New-England, Jan. 1, 1772.

SIR,

As your Magazine is a proper repository for any thing valuable or curious, I hope you will excuse the communicating the following by one of your subscribers.

There is in this town a young *Negro woman*, who left her country at ten years of age, and has been in *this* eight years. She is a compleat sempstress, an accomplished mistress of her pen,

and discovers a most surprising genius. Some of her productions have seen the light, among which is a poem on the death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield.—The following was occasioned by her being in company with some young ladies of family, when one of them said she did not remember, among all the poetical pieces she had seen, ever to have met with a poem upon RECOLLECTION. The *African* (so let me call her, for so in fact she is) took the hint, went home to her master's, and soon sent what follows.

"MADAM,

Agreeable to your proposing *Recollection* as a subject proper for me to write upon, I enclose these few thoughts upon it; and, as you was the first person who mentioned it, I thought none more proper to dedicate it to; and, if it meets with your approbation, the poem is honoured, and the authoress satisfied. I am, Madam,

Your very humble servant, PHILLIS."

RECOLLECTION.

To Miss A—M—, humbly inscribed by the Authoress.

MNEME, begin; inspire, ye sacred Nine!
 Your vent'rous *Afric* in the deep design.
 Do ye rekindle the coelestial fire,
 Ye god-like powers! the glowing thoughts inspire,
 5 *Immortal Pow'r!* I trace thy sacred spring,
 Assist my strains, while I *thy* glories sing.
 By *thee*, past acts of many thousand years,
 Rang'd in due order, to the mind appears;
 The *long-forgot* thy gentle hand conveys,
 10 *Returns*, and soft upon the fancy plays.
 Calm, in the visions of the night he pours
 Th' exhaustless treasures of his secret stores.

Swift from above he wings his downy flight
 Thro' *Phoebe's* realm, fair regent of the night.
 15 Thence to the raptur'd poet gives his aid,
 Dwells in his heart, or hovers round his head;
 To give instruction to the lab'ring mind,
 Diffusing light coelestial and refin'd.
 Still he pursues, unweari'd in the race,
 20 And wraps his senses in the pleasing maze.
 The Heav'nly Phantom *points* the actions done
 In the past worlds, and tribes beneath the sun.
 He, from his throne in ev'ry human breast,
 Has *vice* condemn'd, and ev'ry *virtue* bless'd.
 25 Sweet are the sounds in which thy words we hear,
 Coelestial musick to the ravish'd ear.
 We hear thy voice, resounding o'er the plains,
 Excelling Maro's sweet Menellian strains.
 But awful *Thou!* to that perfidious race,
 30 Who scorn thy warnings, nor the good embrace;
 By *Thee* unveil'd, the horrid crime appears,
Thy mighty hand redoubled fury bears;
 The time mis-spent augments their hell of woes,
 While through each breast the dire contagion flows.
 35 Now turn and leave the rude ungraceful scene,
 And paint fair *Virtue* in immortal green.
 For ever flourish in the glowing veins,
 For ever flourish in poetick strains.
 Be *Thy* employ to guide my early days,
 40 And *Thine* the tribute of my youthful lays.

 Now **eighteen years* their destin'd course have run,
 In due succession, round the central sun;
 How did each folly unregarded pass!
 But sure 'tis graven on eternal brass!
 45 To *recollect*, inglorious I return;
 'Tis mine past follies and past crimes to mourn.
 The *virtue*, ah! unequal to the *vice*,
 Will scarce afford small reason to rejoice.

Such, RECOLLECTION! is thy pow'r, high-
 thron'd

50 In ev'ry breast of mortals, ever own'd.
 The wretch, who dar'd the vengeance of the skies,
 At last awakes with horror and surprise.
 By *Thee* alarm'd, he sees impending fate,
 He howls in anguish, and repents too late.
 55 But oft *thy* kindness moves with timely fear
 The furious rebel in his mad career.
 Thrice bless'd the man, who in *thy* sacred shrine
 Improves the REFUGE from the wrath divine.

*Her age.

[broadside at the Library of Congress]

To the Rev. Mr. *Pitkin*, on the DEATH of his LADY.

WHERE Contemplation finds her sacred Spring;
 Where heav'nly Music makes the Centre ring;
 Where *Virtue* reigns unsull[i]ed, and divine;
 Where *Wisdom* thron'd, and all the Graces shine;
 5 There sits thy Spouse, amid the glitt'ring Throng;
 There central *Beauty* feasts the ravish'd Tongue;
 With recent Powers, with recent glories crown'd,
 The Choirs angelic shout her Welcome round.

 The virtuous Dead, demand a grateful Tear—
 10 But cease thy Grief a-while, thy Tears forbear,
 Not thine alone, the Sorrow I relate,
 Thy blooming Off-spring feel the mighty Weight;
 Thus, from the Bosom of the tender Vine,
 The Branches torn, fall, wither, sink supine.

 15 Now flies the Soul, thro' Aether unconfin'd.
 Thrice happy State of the immortal Mind!
 Still in thy Breast tumultuous Passions rise,
 And urge the lucent Torrent from thine Eyes.
 Amidst the Seats of Heaven, a Place is free

71
61/10 + 8 ~ 18 years
PHILLIS WHEATLEY

34 "When all forsook I trod the press alone,
And conquer'd by omnipotence my own;
For man's release sustain'd the pond'rous load,
For man the wrath of an immortal God:
15 To execute th' Eternal's dread command
My soul I sacrific'd with willing hand;
Sinless I stood before the avenging frown,
Atoning thus for vices not my own."

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

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

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

1761 ~ 7-9
+ 10
"recollection" and "immortality" are general female

OP RECOLLECTION.

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

written like 1771
power

Mneme in our nocturnal visions pours
The ample treasure of her secret stores;

"night" & "nocturnal"
10

perhaps the objective in "Hymn to Mneme" ?
"wholly and her powers of liberation"

exact same by Phyllis

slave tender as tribute

agent of justice

bitter to the soul

years ~ 1771

presently occurs as it often happens

stop & see a hymn to the Enemy

POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Swift from above she wings her silent flight
Through Phoebe's realms, fair regent of the night;
And, in her pomp of images display'd,
To the high-raptur'd poet gives her aid,
15 Through the unbounded regions of the mind,
Diffusing light celestial and refin'd.
The heav'nly phantom paints the actions done
By ev'ry (tribe) beneath the rolling sun.

Mneme, enthron'd within the human breast,
20 Has vice condemn'd, and ev'ry virtue blest.
How sweet the sound when we her plaudit hear?
Sweeter than music to the ravish'd ear,
Sweeter than Maro's entertaining strains
Resounding through the groves, and hills, and plains.

25 But how is Mneme dreaded by the race,
Who scorn her warnings and despise her grace?
By her unveil'd each horrid crime appears,
Her awful hand a cup of wormwood bears.
Days, years mispent, O what a hell of woe!
Hers the worst tortures that our souls can know.

Now eighteen years their destin'd course have run,
In fast succession round the central sun.
How did the follies of that period pass
Unnotic'd, but behold them writ in brass!
35 In Recollection see them fresh return,
And sure 'tis mine to be asham'd, and mourn.

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

Of Recollection such the pow'r enthron'd
In ev'ry breast, and thus her pow'r is own'd.
The wretch, who dar'd the vengeance of the skies,
At last awakes in horror and surprize,
By her alarm'd, he sees impending fate,

At last awakes in horror and surprize, By her alarm'd, he sees impending fate,

Apple by 1771
"other imagery in" gave ~ long way from ~ Ethiopian form?
recollection helps the poet
clarifies thought + thinking for the poet

sweeter than the poetry of Virgil

bitter place
for some, recollection is dangerous, it hurts

18 years old permanent!

in focus of what when they sees, emotions and, in tears of

20 x 4 justice time 7

power of recollection is both in the past (line 6) and present (144)

restoration ~ wretched

present tense

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

He howls in anguish, and repents too late.
But O what peace, what joys are hers t' impart
To ev'ry holy, ev'ry upright heart!
Thrice blest the man, who, in her sacred shrine,
Feels himself shelter'd from the wrath divine!

1-3 sick from reflection, clean conscience

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.

50
"fettered" "captivity" "iron bands" "prize of the world" "sacred shrine"

Now here, now there, the roving Fancy flies,
Till some lov'd object 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 through 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.

Though Winter frowns to Fancy's captured eyes
The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;
The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,

conditioned (power of imagination, if used)

36
They individuals have not been recognized
He lives in humanity

53
lines
"Recollections" (50 lines)

the glories of the imagination

"captivity" "fettered" "binds!"

imagination in "bound" and "perchance"

potential of the imagination {!}

POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

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.

30
imagination were important than reflection?

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.

35
"passions" feelings

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.

30
Soni: Monsoon
45
"Lark" "sun" "showered" "Ethereal" "power"

Tithon's mental lover

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

THROUGH airy roads he wings his instant flight
To purer regions of celestial light;
Enlarg'd he sees unnumber'd systems roll,

(sheet-skinned) child: Memnon prince of Ethiopia married to Tithon

see "Liquor" 37
"flowers" "cultivation" "forests" "imperial command" "have Wheatley receiving imperious commands {!}"

tie to "Mourning" "a dark" "the birds' eyes" "but" "intelligible" "u sp. 2875"

must leave her construction unobscure

white people and Boston's weather

the imagination is the contrast
"Aurora, plover and the fancy is secondary" "Aurora" "Tithon's mental lover"

Aurora's → goddess of the dawn,