

# *On Being Brought from Africa to America*

[Phillis Wheatley](#) - 1753-1784

'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.

# *On Virtue*

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

Auspicious queen, thine heav'nly pinions spread,  
And lead celestial *Chastity* along;  
Lo! now her sacred retinue descends,  
Array'd in glory from the orbs above.  
Attend me, *Virtue*, thro' my youthful years!  
O leave me not to the false joys of time!  
But guide my steps to endless life and bliss.  
*Greatness*, or *Goodness*, say what I shall call thee,  
To give an higher appellation still,  
Teach me a better strain, a nobler lay,  
O thou, enthron'd with Cherubs in the realms of day!