

Thomas Woolston, "Sonnet to the Memory of Falconer, Author of the Shipwreck"

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THOMAS WOOLSTON

“Sonnet to the Memory of Falconer, Author of the Shipwreck”

Ill-fated Bard marine, who strung the lyre,
A chilling tale of sorrow to rehearse,
In all the mournful melody of verse,
Warm'd by a beam of true Maeonian fire;
Well might the theme the tuneful breast inspire, 5
Who felt the rage of Fate's most adverse storm,
And saw grim Death's most drear terrific form,
Whilst struggling round thy gallant mates expire.
Thy strains to distant times their names shall give,
Snatch'd from oblivion's ever-dreaded gloom, 10
Oh that my Muse could bid thy mem'ry live,
And paint in verse like thine thy mournful doom,
The plaintive strains with energy should flow,
And sympathy unborn should melt at Falconer's woe.

NOTES:

Title *Falconer, the Author of the Shipwreck* William Falconer (1732-1769), published a wildly popular epic poem titled *The Shipwreck* in 1762.

1 lyre “A stringed instrument of the harp kind, used by the Greeks for accompanying song and recitation” (*OED*).

4 Maeonian “A native inhabitant of Maeonia; a Lydian. Frequently in reference to Homer, who, according to some accounts, was born at Smyrna in Maeonia” or modern day Turkey (*OED*).

10 oblivion “The state or condition of having been forgotten” (*OED*).

11 Muse The source of poetic inspiration.

12 doom “It is said he was lost in the Aurora frigate going to the East Indies.—We should be glad to see

some authentic memoirs of him" [Editor's Note].

13 *plaintive* "Having the character of a lament; expressive of sorrow; mournful, sad" (*OED*).

Source: *The Gentleman's Magazine* (July 1789), p. 650.

Edited by Randall Pedersen

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