Phillis Wheatley, â??Ode to Neptune. On Mrs. Wâ??â??s Voyage to Englandâ?•

Description

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

â??ODE to NEPTUNE. On Mrs. Wâ??â??s Voyage to Englandâ?•

I.

WHILE raging tempests shake the shore,
While *Aelusâ??* thunders round us roar,
And sweep impetuous oâ??er the plain,
Be still, O tyrant of the main;
Nor let thy brow contracted frowns betray,
While my *Susannah* skims the watâ??ry way.

II.

The *Powâ??r* propitious hears the lay,
The blue-eyâ??d daughters of the sea
With sweeter cadence glide along,
And *Thames* responsive joins the song.
Pleasâ??d with their notes *Sol* sheds benign his ray,
And double radiance decks the face of day.

III.

To court thee to *Brittanniaâ??s* arms
Serene the climes and mild the sky,
Her region boasts unnumberâ??d charms,
Thy welcome smiles in evâ??ry eye.
Thy promise *Neptune* keep, record my prayâ??r,
Nor give my wishes to the empty air.

Boston, *October* 10, 1772.

NOTES:

Title Mrs. Wâ??â??s The poem suggests this might be Wheatleyâ??s mistress, Susanna Wheatley (see line 6); however, there is no surviving evidence that she ever traveled to England. For a discussion of this issue, see Julian D. Mason, ed., *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, p. 84.

2 *Aelusâ??* Greek god of the winds.

8 *blue-eyâ??d daughters of the sea* The Nereids, sea nymphs of Greek mythology.

10 *Thames* Father Thames; god of the river Thames flowing through southern England.

11 *Sol* Roman god of the sun.

13 *Brittanniaâ??s* â??Britain personified as a womanâ?• (*OED*).

14 *climes* â??Atmosphereâ?• (*OED*).

17 *Neptune* Roman god of water and, because of his identification with Poseidon, the sea (*OCD*).

Source: *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (Albany, 1793), p. 55. [*Google Books*]

Edited by Marco Varni