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Phillis Wheatley

Phillis Wheatley

b. West Africa, c. 1753-55; d. Boston, 12/5/1784.

Named after the slave ship *Phillis* that brought her to America, Phillis Wheatley was the first African-American poet to have her work published. The Wheatleys, her Boston owners, encouraged her education. She published her first poem at age 13. During the war, Phillis wrote a poem to George Washington, who praised her "poetical talents" and "genius". She gained her freedom, but died young and poor.



*"Enlarge the close contracted mind,
And fill it with thy fire."*