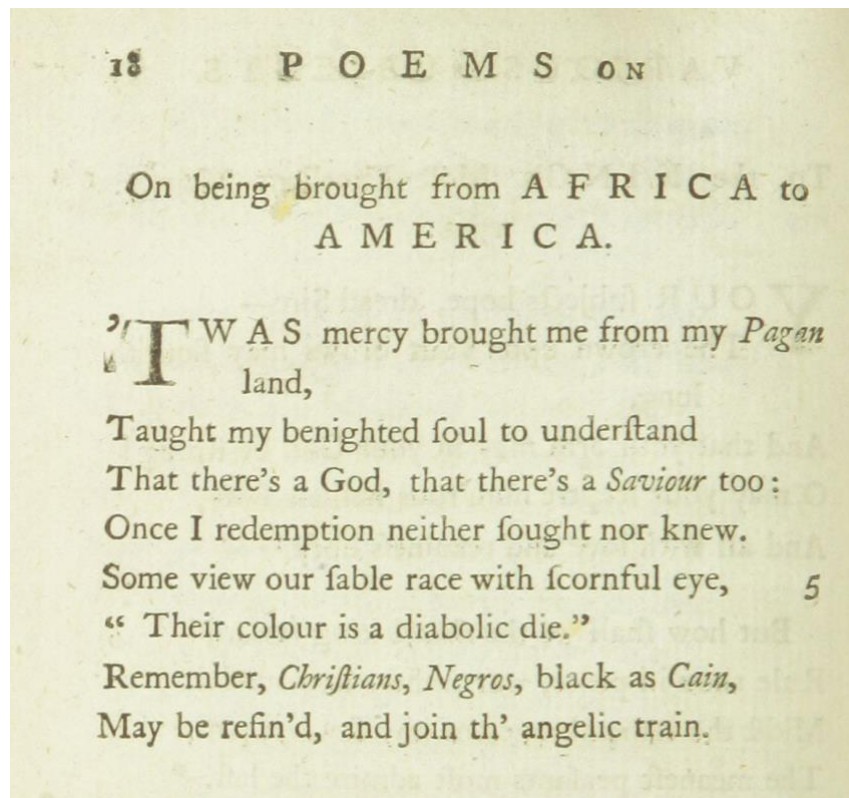


Phillis Wheatley, On Being Brought from Africa to America (1773)

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) was born in Africa, kidnapped and enslaved at the age of seven, and then forced into domestic service for the Boston family of John and Susanna Wheatley. During the 1760s and 1770s, Phillis Wheatley was enslaved in Boston but learned how to read and write and proved to be a true prodigy as a poet. She began publishing poems in local newspapers in the late 1760s and became something of a celebrity by the early 1770s. Her first published collection of 28 poems, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773) appeared in London and included "On Being Brought From Africa to America."

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.



As the poem appeared in its original 1773 published edition in London (British Library)

For more background, visit: <https://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/teagle/texts/phillis-wheatley-on-being-brought-from-africa-1773/>