

"On the Death of J. C. an Infant"

By Phillis Wheatley

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On the Death of J. C. an Infant.

1 NO more the flow'ry scenes of pleasure rise,
2 Nor charming prospects greet the mental eyes,
3 No more with joy we view that lovely face
4 Smiling, disportive, flush'd with ev'ry grace.

5 The tear of sorrow flows from ev'ry eye,
6 Groans answer groans, and sighs to sighs reply;
7 What sudden pangs shot thro' each aching heart,
8 When, *Death* , thy messenger dispatch'd his dart?
9 Thy dread attendants, all-destroying *Pow'r* ,
10 Hurried the infant to his mortal hour.
11 Could'st thou unpitying close those radiant eyes?
12 Or fail'd his artless beauties to surprize?
13 Could not his innocence thy stroke controul,
14 Thy purpose shake, and soften all thy soul?

15 The blooming babe, with shades of *Death* o'erspread,
16 No more shall smile, no more shall raise its head,
17 But, like a branch that from the tree is torn,
18 Falls prostrate, wither'd, languid, and forlorn.
19 "Where flies my *James* ?" 'tis thus I seem to hear
20 The parent ask, "Some angel tell me where
21 "He wings his passage thro' the yielding air?"
22 Methinks a cherub bending from the skies
23 Observes the question, and serene replies,
24 "In heav'n's high palaces your babe appears:
25 "Prepare to meet him, and dismiss your tears."
26 Shall not th' intelligence your grief restrain,
27 And turn the mournful to the chearful strain?
28 Cease your complaints, suspend each rising sigh,
29 Cease to accuse the Ruler of the sky.
30 Parents, no more indulge the falling tear:
31 Let *Faith* to heav'n's refulgent domes repair,
32 There see your infant, like a seraph glow:
33 What charms celestial in his numbers flow

34 Melodious, while the soul-enchancing strain
35 Dwells on his tongue, and fills th' ethereal plain?

36 Enough -- for ever cease your murm'ring breath;
37 Not as a foe, but friend converse with *Death* ,
38 Since to the port of happiness unknown
39 He brought that treasure which you call your own.
40 The gift of heav'n intrusted to your hand
41 Chearful resign at the divine command:
42 Not at your bar must sov'reign *Wisdom* stand.