

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Jupiter Hammon**

**- 4 poems -**

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## **Jupiter Hammon (1711-1800)**

Jupiter Hammon (October 17, 1711 – before 1806) was a Black poet who became the first African-American published writer in America when a poem appeared in print in 1760. He was a slave his entire life, and the date of his death is unknown. He was living in 1790 at the age of 79, and died by 1806. Hammon was a devout Christian, and is considered one of the founders of African American literature.

Hammon was born a slave and was owned by four generations of the Lloyd family of Queens on Long Island, New York. His parents were both slaves. His father, called Opium, had a reputation for frequent escape attempts; his mother was named Rose. Hammon was allowed to attend school, and unlike most slaves could read and write.

On September 24, 1786, He expressed his views on slavery when he delivered his "Address to the Negroes of the State of New York", also known as the "Hammon Address", before the African Society. Hammon wrote the speech at age seventy-six after a lifetime of slavery. It contains his famous words, "If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being black, or for being slaves."

The speech draws heavily on Christian motifs and theology. For example, Hammon said that Black people should maintain their high moral standards precisely because being slaves on Earth had already secured their place in heaven. Hammon's speech also promoted the idea of a gradual emancipation as a way of ending slavery. It is thought that Hammon stated this plan because he knew that slavery was so entrenched in American society that an immediate emancipation of all slaves would be difficult to achieve. His speech was initially published by the New York Quakers, and was later reprinted by several groups opposed to slavery, including the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, because the strong religious motifs and ideas of gradual emancipation were moderate enough to be taken seriously by whites, but still firmly rooted in abolition.

Hammon's famous speech and his poetry are often anthologized. The first known African American to publish literature in the US (several years later in 1767, Phillis Wheatley had published her poems, but in England, not the US), Hammon was a favorite servant, clerk, farmhand, and artisan in the Lloyd family business. Hammon was allowed to attend school and was a fervent Christian, as were the Lloyds. His first published poem was written on Christmas Day, 1760. "An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries: Composed by Jupiter Hammon, a Negro belonging to Mr. Lloyd of Queen's Village, on Long Island, the 25th of December, 1760" appeared as a broadside in 1761. Three other poems and three sermons

essays followed. In Hammon's "Address to the Negroes of New York, to the African Society," he said that while he personally had no wish to be free, he did wish others, especially "the young Negroes, were free."

## **A Dialogue, intitled, The Kind Master And The Dutiful Servant**

Master.  
Come my servant, follow me,  
According to thy place;  
And surely God will be with thee,  
And send the heav'nly grace.

Servant.  
Dear Master, I will follow thee,  
According to thy word,  
And pray that God may be with me,  
And save thee in the Lord.

Master.  
My Servant, lovely is the Lord,  
And blest those servants be,  
That truly love his holy word,  
And thus will follow me.

Servant.  
Dear Master, that's my whole delight,  
Thy pleasure for to do;  
As far as grace and truth's in sight,  
Thus far I'll surely go.

Master.  
My Servant, grace proceeds from God,  
And truth should be with thee;  
Whence e'er you find it in his word,  
Thus far come follow me.

Servant,  
Dear Master, now without controul,  
I quickly follow thee;  
And pray that God would bless thy soul,  
His heav'nly place to see.

Master.  
My Servant, Heaven is high above,  
Yea, higher than the sky:  
I pray that God would grant his love,  
Come follow me thereby.

Servant.  
Dear Master, now I'll follow thee,  
And trust upon the Lord;  
The only safety that I see,  
Is Jesus's holy word.

Master.  
My Servant, follow Jesus now,  
Our great victorious King;  
Who governs all both high and low,

And searches things within.

Servant.

Dear Master I will follow thee,  
When praying to our King;  
It is the Lamb I plainly see,  
Invites the sinner in.

Master.

My Servant, we are sinners all,  
But follow after grace;  
I pray that God would bless thy soul,  
And fill thy heart with grace.

Servant.

Dear Master I shall follow then,  
The voice of my great King;  
As standing on some distant land,  
Inviting sinners in.

Master.

My Servant we must all appear,  
And follow then our King;  
For sure he'll stand where sinners are,  
To take true converts in.

Servant.

Dear Master, now if Jesus calls,  
And sends his summons in;  
We'll follow saints and angels all,  
And come unto our King.

Master.

My Servant now come pray to God  
Consider well his call;  
Strive to obey his holy word,  
That Christ may love us all

A Line on the present War.

Servant.

Dear Master, now it is a time,  
A time of great distress;  
We'll follow after things divine,  
And pray for happiness.

Master.

Then will the happy day appear,  
That virtue shall increase;  
Lay up the sword and drop the spear,  
And nations seek for peace.

Servant.

Then shall we see the happy end,  
Tho' still in some distress;  
That distant foes shall act like friends,  
And leave their wickedness.

Master.

We pray that God would give us grace,  
And make us humble too;  
Let ev'ry nation seek for peace,  
And virtue make a show.

Servant.

Then we shall see the happy day,  
That virtue is in power;  
Each holy act shall have its sway,  
Extend from shore to shore.

Master.

This is the work of God's own hand,  
We see by precepts given;  
To relieve distress and save the land,  
Must be the pow'r of heav'n.

Servant.

Now glory be unto our God,  
Let ev'ry nation sing;  
Strive to obey his holy word,  
That Christ may take them in.

Master.

Where endless joys shall never cease,  
Blest Angels constant sing;  
The glory of their God increase,  
Hallelujahs to their King.

Servant.

Thus the Dialogue shall end,  
Strive to obey the word;  
When ev'ry nation act like friends,  
Shall be the sons of God.

Believe me now my Christian friends,  
Believe your friend call'd HAMMON:  
You cannot to your God attend,  
And serve the God of Mammon.

If God is pleased by his own hand  
To relieve distresses here;  
And grant a peace throughout the the land,  
'Twill be a happy year.

'Tis God alone can give us peace;  
It's not the pow'r of man:  
When virtuous pow'r shall increase,  
'Twill beautify the land.

Then shall we rejoice and sing  
By pow'r of virtues word,  
Come sweet Jesus, heav'nly King,  
Thou art the Son of God.

When virtue comes in bright array,  
Discovers ev'ry sin;  
We see the dangers of the day,  
And fly unto our King.

Now glory be unto our God,  
All praise be justly given;  
Let ev'ry soul obey his word,  
And seek the joys of Heav'n.

Jupiter Hammon

## A Poem For Children With Thoughts On Death

O ye young and thoughtless youth,  
Come seek the living God,  
The scriptures are a sacred truth,  
Ye must believe the word.

Tis God alone can make you wise,  
His wisdom's from above,  
He fills the soul with sweet supplies  
By his redeeming love.

Remember youth the time is short,  
Improve the present day  
And pray that God may guide your thoughts,  
and teach your lips to pray.

To pray unto the most high God,  
and beg restraining grace,  
Then by the power of his word  
You'll see the Saviour's face.

Little children they may die,  
Turn to their native dust,  
Their souls shall leap beyond the skies,  
and live among the just

Like little worms they turn and crawl,  
and gasp for every breath,  
The blessed Jesus sends his call,  
and takes them to his rest.

Thus the youth are born to die,  
The time is hastening on,  
The Blessed Jesus rends the sky,  
and makes his power known.

Then ye shall hear the angels sing  
The trumpet give a sound,  
Glory, glory to our King,  
The Saviour's coming down.<sup>5</sup>

Start ye Saints from dusty beds,  
and hear a Saviour call,  
Twas Jesus Christ that died and bled,  
and thus preserv'd thy soul.

This the portion of the just,  
Who lov'd to serve the Lord,  
Their bodies starting from the dust,  
Shall rest upon their God.

They shall join that holy word,  
That angels constant sing,

Glory glory to the Lord,  
Hallelujahs to our King.

Thus the Saviour will appear,  
With guards of heavenly host,  
Those blessed Saints, shall then declare,  
Tis Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Then shall ye hear the trumpet sound,  
The graves give up their dead,  
Those blessed saints shall quick awake,  
and leave their dusty beds.

Then shall you hear the trumpet sound,  
and rend the native sky,  
Those bodies starting from the ground,  
In the twinkling of an eye.

There to sing the praise of God,  
and join the angelic train,  
And by the power of his word,  
Unite together again.

Where angels stand for to admit  
Their souls at the first word,  
Cast sceptres down at Jesus feet  
Crying holy holy Lord.

Now glory be unto our God  
all praise be justly given,  
Ye humble souls that love the Lord  
Come seek the joys of Heaven.

Jupiter Hammon

## **An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatly**

O, come you pious youth: adore  
The wisdom of thy God.  
In bringing thee from distant shore,  
To learn His holy word.

Thou mightst been left behind,  
Amidst a dark abode;  
God's tender Mercy still combin'd,  
Thou hast the holy word.

Fair wisdom's ways are paths of peace,  
And they that walk therein,  
Shall reap the joys that never cease,  
And Christ shall be their king.

God's tender mercy brought thee here,  
tost o'er the raging main;  
In Christian faith thou hast a share,  
Worth all the gold of Spain.

While thousands tossed by the sea,  
And others settled down,  
God's tender mercy set thee free,  
From dangers still unknown.

That thou a pattern still might be,  
To youth of Boston town,  
The blessed Jesus thee free,  
From every sinful wound.

The blessed Jesus, who came down,  
Unveil'd his sacred face,  
To cleanse the soul of every wound,  
And give repenting grace.

That we poor sinners may obtain  
The pardon of our sin;  
Dear blessed Jesus now constrain,  
And bring us flocking in.

Come you, Phillis, now aspire,  
And seek the living God,  
So step by step thou mayst go higher,  
Till perfect in the word.

While thousands mov'd to distant shore,  
And others left behind,  
The blessed Jesus still adore,  
Implant this in thy mind.

Thou hast left the heathen shore;  
Thro' mercy of the Lord,

Among the heathen live no more,  
Come magnify thy God.

I pray the living God may be,  
The sheperd of thy soul;  
His tender mercies still are free,  
His mysteries to unfold.

Thou, Phillis, when thou hunger hast,  
Or pantest for thy God;  
Jesus Christ is thy relief,  
Thou hast the holy word.

The bounteous mercies of the Lord,  
Are hid beyond the sky,  
And holy souls that love His word,  
Shall taste them when they die.

These bounteous mercies are from God,  
The merits of his Son;  
The humble soul that loves his word,  
He chooses for his own.

Come, dear Phillis, be advisíd,  
To drink Samaria's flood;  
There nothing is that shall suffice,  
But Christ's redeeming blood.

When thousands muse with earthly toys,  
And range about the street,  
Dear Phillis, seek for heaven's joys,  
Where we do hope to meet.

When God shall send His summons down,  
And number saints together.  
Blest angels chant, (triumphant sound)  
Come live with me forever.

The humble soul shall fly to God,  
And leave the things of time,  
Start forth as 'twere at the first word,  
To taste things more divine.

Behold! the soul shall waft away,  
Wheneíer we come to die,  
And leave this cottage made of clay,  
In twinkling of an eye.

Now glory be to the Most High,  
United praises given,  
By all on earth, incessantly,  
And all the host of heavín.

Jupiter Hammon

## An Evening Thought

Salvation comes by Jesus Christ alone,  
The only Son of God;  
Redemption now to every one,  
That love his holy Word.  
Dear Jesus we would fly to Thee,  
And leave off every Sin,  
Thy tender Mercy well agree;  
Salvation from our King.  
Salvation comes now from the Lord,  
Our victorious King;  
His holy Name be well ador'd,  
Salvation surely bring.  
Dear Jesus give thy Spirit now,  
Thy Grace to every Nation,  
That han't the Lord to whom we bow,  
The Author of Salvation.  
Dear Jesus unto Thee we cry,  
Give us thy Preparation;  
Turn not away thy tender Eye;  
We seek thy true Salvation.  
Salvation comes from God we know,  
The true and only One;  
It's well agreed and certain true,  
He gave his only Son.  
Lord hear our penitential Cry:  
Salvation from above;  
It is the Lord that doth supply,  
With his Redeeming Love.  
Dear Jesus by thy precious Blood,  
The World Redemption have:  
Salvation comes now from the Lord,  
He being thy captive Slave.  
Dear Jesus let the Nations cry,  
And all the People say,  
Salvation comes from Christ on high,  
Haste on Tribunal Day.  
We cry as Sinners to the Lord,  
Salvation to obtain;  
It is firmly fixt his holy Word,  
Ye shall not cry in vain.  
Dear Jesus unto Thee we cry,  
And make our Lamentation:  
O let our Prayers ascend on high;  
We felt thy Salvation.  
Lord turn our dark benighted Souls;  
Give us a true Motion,  
And let the Hearts of all the World,  
Make Christ their Salvation.  
Ten Thousand Angels cry to Thee,  
Yea louder than the Ocean.  
Thou art the Lord, we plainly see;  
Thou art the true Salvation.

Now is the Day, excepted Time;  
The Day of Salvation;  
Increase your Faith, do not repine:  
Awake ye every Nation.  
Lord unto whom now shall we go,  
Or seek a safe Abode;  
Thou hast the Word Salvation too  
The only Son of God.  
Ho! every one that hunger hath,  
Or pineth after me,  
Salvation be thy leading Staff,  
To set the Sinner free.  
Dear Jesus unto Thee we fly;  
Depart, depart from Sin,  
Salvation doth at length supply,  
The Glory of our King.  
Come ye Blessed of the Lord,  
Salvation gently given;  
O turn your Hearts, accept the Word,  
Your Souls are fit for Heaven.  
Dear Jesus we now turn to Thee,  
Salvation to obtain;  
Our Hearts and Souls do meet again,  
To magnify thy Name.  
Come holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,  
The Object of our Care;  
Salvation doth increase our Love;  
Our Hearts hath felt thy fear.  
Now Glory be to God on High,  
Salvation high and low;  
And thus the Soul on Christ rely,  
To Heaven surely go.  
Come Blessed Jesus, Heavenly Dove,  
Accept Repentance here;  
Salvation give, with tender Love;  
Let us with Angels share.

Jupiter Hammon