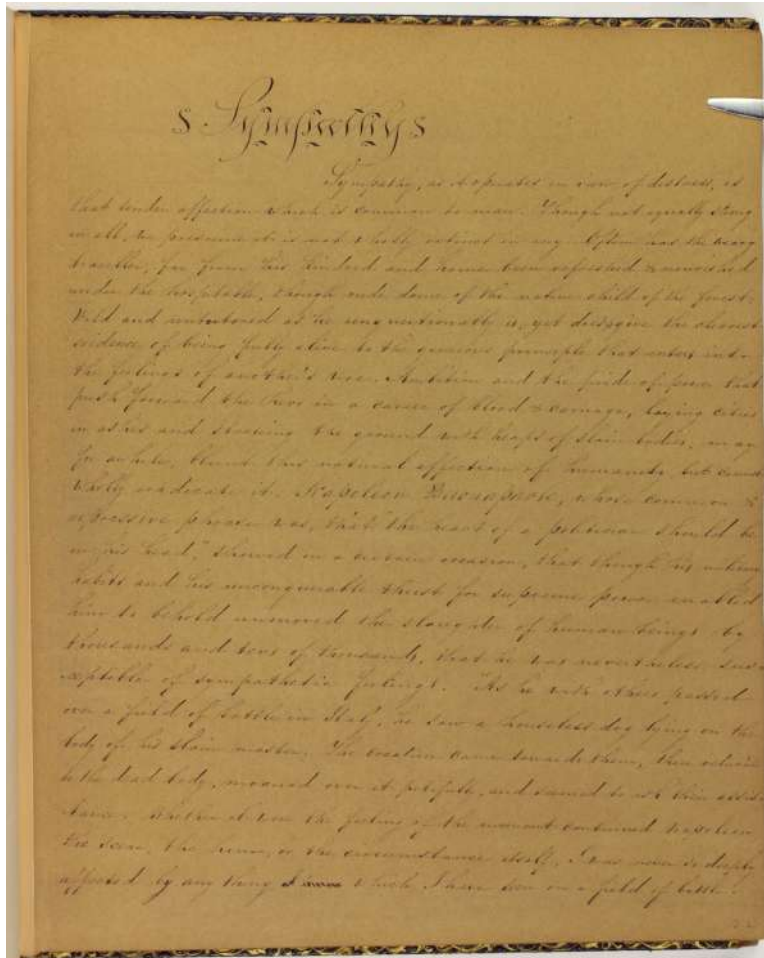
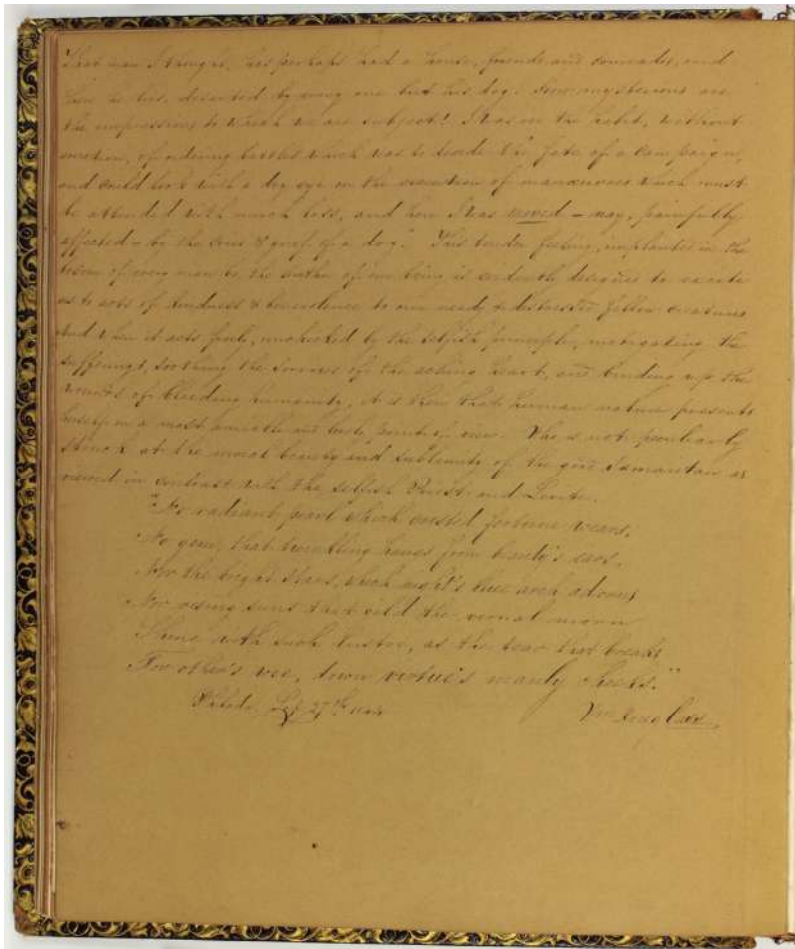


Martina Dickerson Album

Pages 22, 22v





Headnote:

Written on September 27, 1844 by the Reverend William Douglass of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, this entry in Martina Dickerson's friendship album evokes the empathy of men despite the harsh and often brutal realities they often have to confront. Douglass effectively does this by using the experience of Napoleon Bonaparte during his first Italian Campaign (1792-1797) and a grieving dog mourning the death of its owner on the battlefield. Douglass concludes his entry with a portion of the poem, "The Botanic Garden", written by Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles Darwin) in 1791.

Transcription:

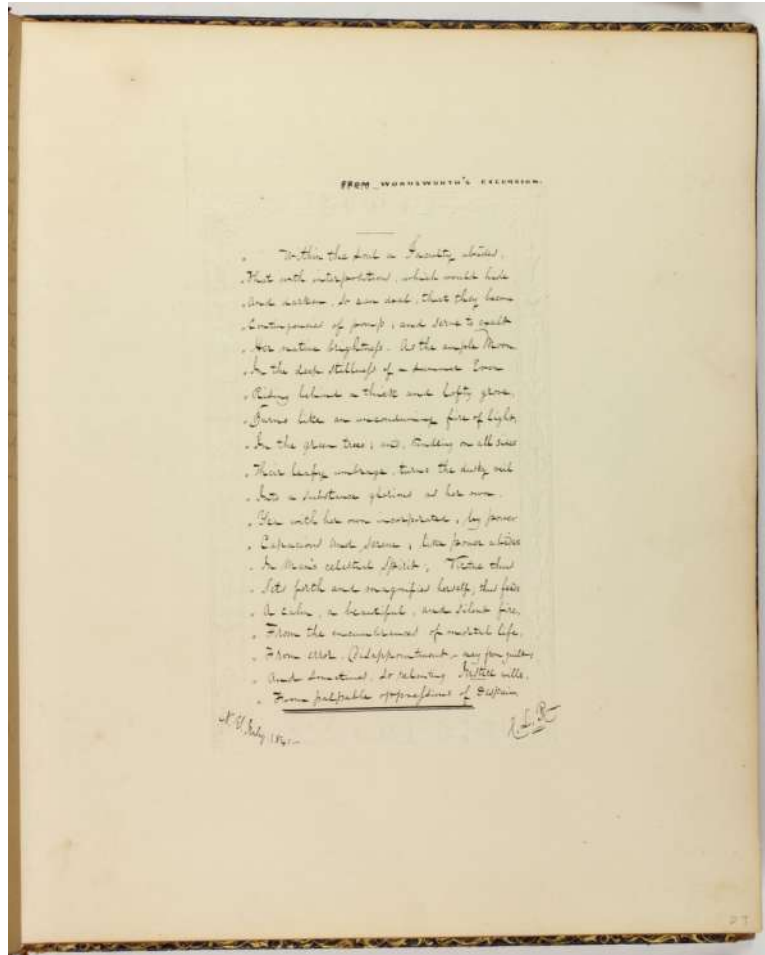
## Sympathy

Sympathy, as it operates in view of distress, is that tender affection which is common to man. Though not equally strong in all, we presume it is not wholly extinct in any. Often has the weary traveller, far from his kindred and home been refreshed & nourished under the hospitable, though rude dome of the native child of the forest. Wild and untutored as he unquestionably is, yet does he give the clearest evidence of being fully alive to the generous principle that enters into the feelings of another's woe. Ambition and the pride of power that push forward the hero in a career of blood & carnage, laying cities in ashes and strewing the ground with heaps of slain bodies; may for awhile, blunt this natural affection of humanity, but cannot wholly eradicate it. Napoleon Buonaparte, whose common & expressive phrase was, that "the heart of a politician should be in his head," showed on a certain occasion, that though his military habits and his unconquerable thirst for supreme power enabled him to behold unmoved the slaughter of human beings by thousands and tens of thousands, that he was nevertheless susceptible of sympathetic feelings. "As he with others passed over a field of battle in Italy, he saw a houseless dog lying on the body of his slain master. The creature came towards them, then returned to the dead body, moaned over it pitifully, and seemed to ask their assistance. Whether it were the feeling of the moment continued Napoleon, the scene, the hour, or the circumstance itself, I was never so deeply affected by anything which I have seen on a field of battle. (22v) That man I thought, has perhaps had a house, friends and comrades, and here he lies, deserted by every one but his dog. How mysterious are the impressions to which we are subject! I was in the habit, without emotion, of ordering battles which was to decide the fate of a campaign, and could look with a dry eye on the execution of maneuvers which must be attended with much loss, and here I was moved — nay, painfully affected — by the cries & grief of a stray dog." This tender feeling, implanted in the bosom of every man by the author of our being is evidently designed to excite us to acts of kindness & benevolence to our needy & distressed fellow creatures. And when it acts freely, unchecked by the selfish principle, mitigating the sufferings, soothing the sorrows of the aching heart, and binding up the wounds of bleeding humanity, it is then that human nature presents herself in a most amiable and lovely point of view. Who is not peculiarly struck at the moral beauty and sublimity of the good Samaritan as viewed in contrast with the selfish Priest and Levite.

"No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,  
No gem, that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears,  
Nor the bright stars, which night's blue arch adorns  
Nor rising suns that gild the vernal morn  
Shine with such lustre, as the tear that breaks  
For other's woe, down virtue's manly cheeks."

Philada. Sep. 27<sup>th</sup> 1844

Wm Douglass



Headnote:

Charles L. Reason contributed "Despondency Corrected," a portion of William Wordsworth's nine-part poem "The Excursion," in July 1841.

Transcription:

From Wordsworth's Excursion.

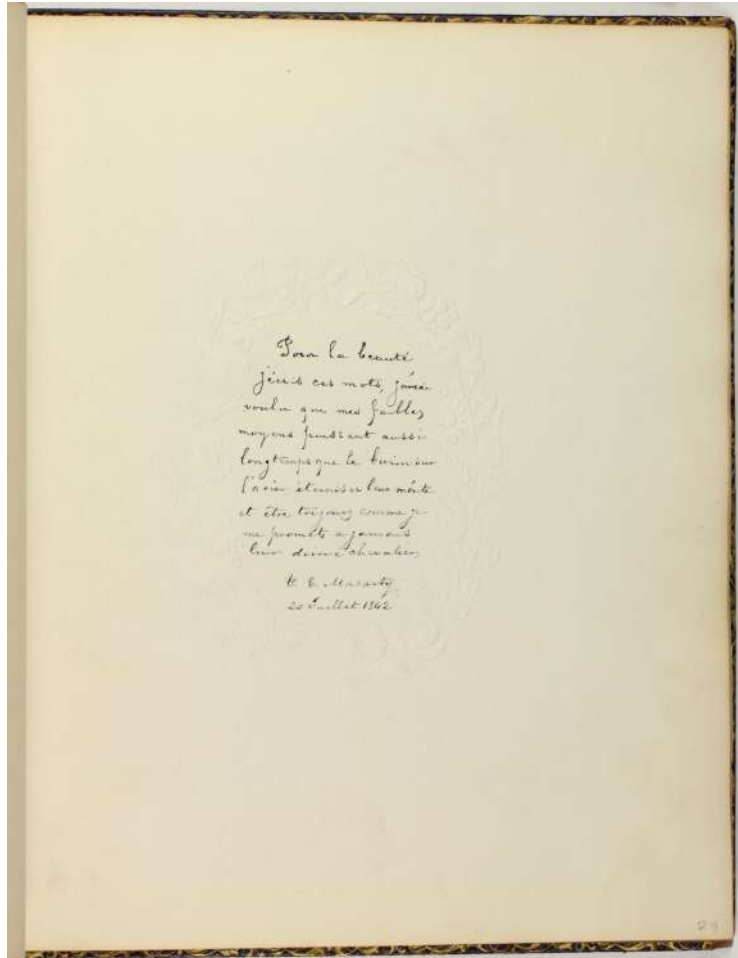
Within the soul a faculty abides,  
That with interpositions, which would hide  
And darken, so can deal, that they become  
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt  
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,  
In the deep stillness of a summer even  
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,  
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light,  
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides  
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil  
Into a substance glorious as her own.  
Yea with her own incorporated, by power  
Capacious and serene; like power abides  
In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus  
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds  
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,  
From the encumbrances of mortal life,  
From error, disappointment, — nay, from guilt;  
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,  
From palpable oppressions of despair.

N.Y. July 1841

C.L.R.

Martina Dickerson Album

Page 29



Headnote:

A French love poem inscribed by V.E. Macarty (possibly of the Macartys of New Orleans).

Transcription:

French:

Pour la beauté  
j'ecris ces mots, j'aurais  
voulu que mes faibles  
moyens puissent aussi  
longtemps que le burin sur  
l'ancien éterniser leur mérite  
et être toujours comme je  
me promets à jamais  
leur dévoué chevalier

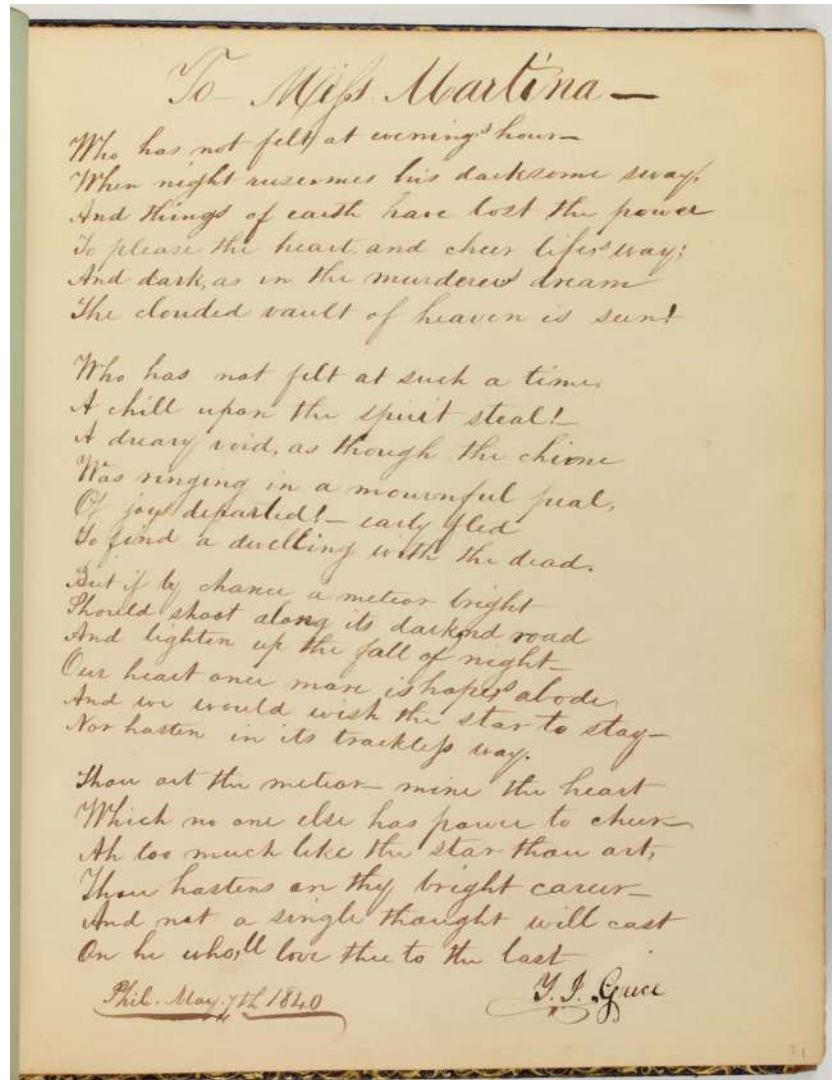
V.E. Macarty  
20 Juillet 1842

Our English translation:

For Beauty  
I write these words  
wishing my lowly means  
can also be the long  
ancient chisel of eternal merit  
and will always be as I promised  
forever your devoted knight

V.E. Macarty  
July 20, 1842





Headnote:

Written to "Miss Martina" on May 7, 1840 and signed by Y. J. Grice of Philadelphia, this original poem was penned to soothe Martina's tormented spirit after the death of her one-year-old son, William Dickerson Jones. Y.J. Grice reminds Dickerson how much her "star" is needed to shine upon those who treasure her.

Transcription:

To Miss Martina –

Who has not felt at evening's hour –  
When night resumes his darksome sway,  
And things of earth have lost the power  
To please the heart and cheer life's way;  
And dark, as in the murderer's dream  
The clouded vault of heaven is seen!

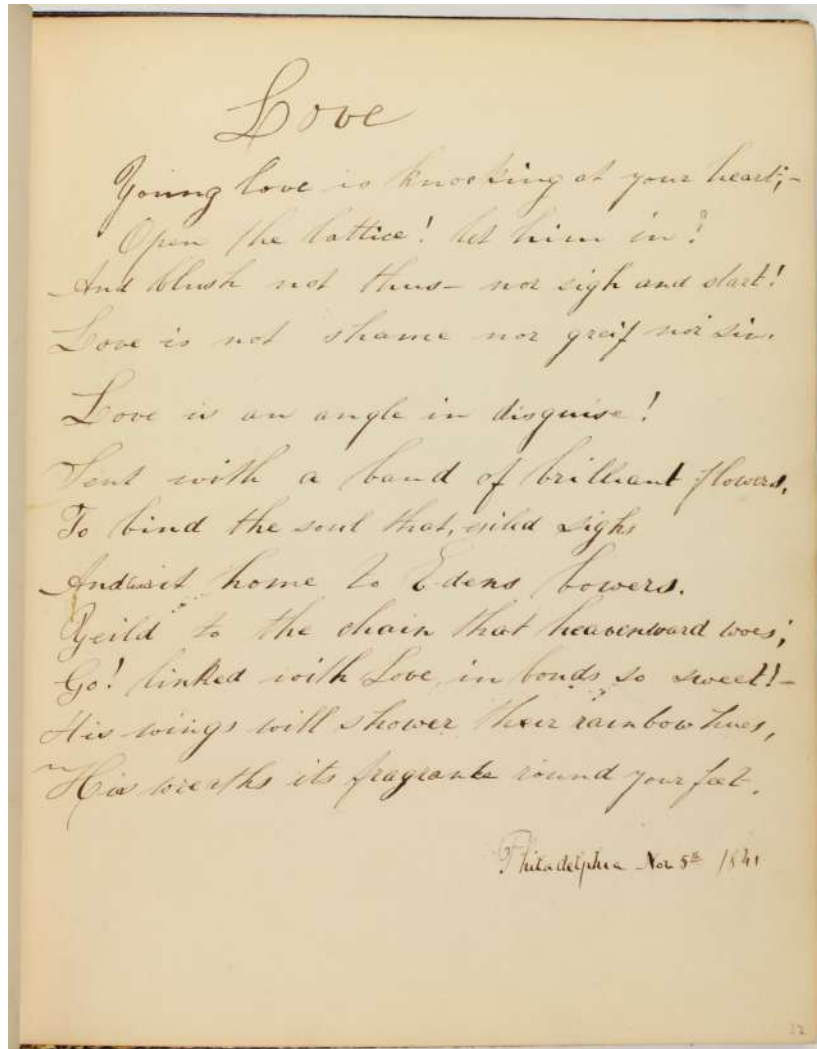
Who has not felt at such a time,  
A chill upon the spirit steal!  
A dreary void, as though the chime  
Was ringing in a mournful peal,  
Of joys departed! — early fled  
To find a dwelling with the dead.

But if by chance a meteor bright  
Should shoot along its darkened road  
And lighten up the fall of night –  
Our heart once more is hope's abode  
And we would wish our star to stay –  
Nor hasten in its trackless way.

Thou art the meteor — mine the heart  
Which no one else has power to cheer –  
Ah too much like the star thou art,  
Thou hastens on thy bright career –  
And not a single thought will cast  
On he who'll love thee to the last

Phil. May 7<sup>th</sup> 1840

Y.J. Grice



Headnote:

This poem was a contribution by an unknown individual to Martina Dickerson's album. The poem in particular speaks to the bond of love shared between two African American friends/associates in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

More specifically the poem seems to represent the power of unyielding love from one person to another. Across distance and time for many African Americans in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, love for one another had no boundaries.

Transcription:

Love

Young Love is knocking at your heart;—  
Open the lattice! Let him in!  
And blush not thus-nor sigh and start!  
Love is not shame nor grief nor sin.  
Love is an angle in disguise!  
Sent with a band of brilliant flowers,  
To find the soul that, exiled sighs  
And lead it home to Edens bowers.  
Yield to the chain that heavenward woes;  
Go! linked with love in bonds so sweet!  
His wings will shower their rainbow hues,  
His wreaths its fragrance round your feet.  
Philadelphia Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> 1841