



GEORGE MOSES HORTON: CRAFTING VIRTUAL FREEDOM THROUGH POETRY

STUDENT HANDOUT 1: ANALYZING "THE SLAVE'S COMPLAINT"

The following is "The Slave's Complaint" by George Moses Horton. The poem was published in 1829 in his *The Hope of Liberty* collection.

Am I sadly cast aside, On misfortune's rugged tide? Will the world my pains **deride** Forever?

Must I dwell in Slavery's night, And all pleasure take its flight, Far beyond my feeble sight, Forever?

Worst of all, must hope grow dim, And withhold her cheering **beam**? Rather let me sleep and dream Forever?

Something still my heart **surveys**, Groping through this dreary maze; Is it Hope? --- then burn and blaze Forever?

Leave me not a wretch confined, Altogether lame and blind— Unto gross despair consigned, Forever!

Heaven! in whom can I confide? Canst thou not for all provide? **Condescend** to be my guide Forever:

And when this **transient** life shall end, Oh, may some kind, eternal friend Bid me from servitude ascend, Forever! deride: ridicule, put down

beam: shaft of light, big smile

survey: examine, inspect

condescend: lower yourself

transient: temporary, passing

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