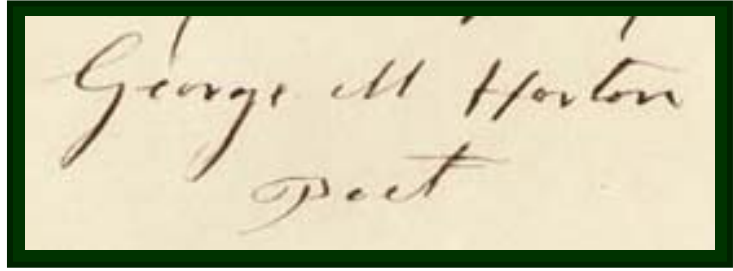




# SLAVERY

**By a Carolinian Slave  
named George Horton  
1828**



Born around 1797 in North Carolina, George Moses Horton taught himself to read as a young man and soon began to write poetry. Living near the state university in Chapel Hill, he sold poems to the male students to give to their girlfriends. Discovered and supported by white benefactors, he began to publish his poetry in 1828 with the appearance in three newspapers of five of his poems, including "Slavery; By a Carolinian Slave named George Horton." The next year his first volume of poetry, *The Hope of Liberty*, was published in an unsuccessful attempt to raise money for his freedom and migration to Liberia. Later volumes appeared: *The Poetical Works of George M. Horton*, *The Colored Bard of North-Carolina* in 1835 and *Naked Genius* in 1865. Despite his quest for emancipation, Horton did not become a free man until the end of the Civil War in 1865. He moved to Philadelphia and died there around 1883.

When first my bosom glowed with hope,  
I gaz'd as from a mountain top  
    On some delightful plain;  
But oh! how transient was the scene —  
It fled as though it had not been,  
    And all my hopes were vain.

How oft this tantalizing blaze  
Has led me through deception's maze;  
    My friend became my foe —  
Then like a plaintive dove I mourn'd,  
To bitter all my sweets were turn'd,  
    And tears began to flow.

Why was the dawning of my birth  
Upon this vile accursed earth,  
    Which is but pain to me?  
Oh! that my soul had winged its flight,  
When first I saw the morning light,  
    To worlds of liberty!

Come melting Pity from afar  
And break this vast, enormous bar  
    Between a wretch and thee;  
Purchase a few shorts days of time,  
And bid a vassal rise sublime  
    On wings of liberty.

Is it because my skin is black,  
That thou should'st be so dull and slack,  
    And scorn to set me free?  
Then let me hasten to the grave,  
The only refuge for the slave,  
    Who mourns for liberty.

The wicked cease from trouble there;  
No more I'd languish or despair —  
    The weary there can rest.  
Oppression's voice is heard no more,  
Drudg'ry and pain, and toil are o'er.  
    Yes! there I shall be blest.

*Freedom's Journal*, 18 July 1828

*Liberator*, 29 March 1834