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This thesis looks at the ways one elite heterosocial literary group in Williamsburg, Virginia, used poetic exchange to discuss their society's developing ideas about politics, marriage, and the roles of women and men. The multi-authored text I analyze was privately printed in 1790, around the time that two of its main contributors, Margaret Lowther Page and John Page, were married.

The extant copy of the book belonged to Margaret, and she used it as a place to record fair copies of additional poems that directly discuss her discontent with her role. In the printed text the male poets discuss two seemingly unrelated topics: the upcoming Page marriage and the issues they encounter in their political careers. Their poetic exchanges with each other demonstrate that marital and political institutions were not only male-centered, but also heavily interconnected. Margaret avoids these topics almost entirely in her printed work, writing many of her poems to female friends about their shared experiences of domestic labor, mourning, and friendship.

I argue that Margaret used literary exchange to establish a female-centered community that provided a system of support outside of marriage. In her marriage she was limited to a domestic role that enabled her husband's political career as a Virginia Congressman, even though the very laws he helped established denied her an official voice in government. Much of her poetry written to female friends subversively opposes the exclusionary systems of marriage and government discussed at length by the male poets. Through exchanges with friends, she privileges female intellectual work over

domestic work as she encourages other women's writing and offers her own. Margaret's proto-feminist ideas participate in a long process of questioning and revising inequalities in American society.

"TO FORM A NEW WORLD, NEW SYSTEMS CREATE":

MARGARET LOWTHER PAGE'S POETIC REVISIONS OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

by

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Introduction

Perhaps late at night after all her household duties were done, Margaret Lowther Page took up her small volume of poems and flipped through the printed pages. In it were her own poems, which must have looked foreign to her set in the permanence of print. Flipping farther, she would find poems written by her new husband, Virginia Congressman John Page, and several of his politically and socially powerful friends. As she leafed through John's section she might have laughed at the idealistic representations the men made of her recent marriage. Amongst these celebratory poems, she would also find her husband's political poems addressing controversial topics about the formation of post-Revolutionary American government. Perhaps she felt vaguely indignant about her exclusion from this discussion, both in the book and in her life.

It is impossible to know exactly when and why she began, but at some point early in her marriage, Margaret started using this printed book to record additional poems. She wrote these new manuscript poems neatly on blank pages between the book's printed sections. She also edited the printed content, meticulously signing her printed poems with "M.L." and John's with "J.P." and adding lengthy explanatory titles to most of John's poems. Because of the radical content of some of her added poems, she might have kept the book to herself, hidden away in one of the many luxurious rooms of Rosewell, the Page plantation in Gloucester, Virginia.

Margaret's copy of this dual print-manuscript volume gives us a glimpse of an elite woman's life in early 1790s Tidewater Virginia, as she experienced courtship and marriage, navigated her place as a subject under the newly formed government, and discussed her life through correspondence with literary friends. Her writing interacts with the male-authored poems to produce a representation of elite post-Revolutionary society in microcosm: its hopes, norms, and incongruities. The Page book contains probably only a small portion of Margaret's work throughout her life. Even the extant volume seems to be missing some of its original pieces: the handwritten poem that appears first in the book is untitled and begins mid-couplet, suggesting it is missing a first page. Even in its fragmented state, this poem can be read as a statement of purpose for the rest of Margaret's work in the book, as she reclaims the multi-authored work by using manuscript to question her limited female role:

> Has promiss'd to please you to take a short Canter,
> And tho' for the Rose we oft meet with a Bramble,
> How sweet in the Regions of Fancy to Ramble.
> With the engaging, to take a short flight,
> Variety, Virtue, and Love to unite.
> To form a new World, new systems create.
> And reign as despotic as tyranic Fate!
> 1-7

In her printed poems, which she knew would meet the eye of John and his male friends, she carefully constructs a pleasing, feminine persona, becoming the "Rose" that social norms dictate she should be. But in the privacy of her manuscript additions, she is free to add "Brambles," questioning her limited role.

As she alludes to the formation of a “new World” and “new systems,” she invokes language associated with the development of the new democratic government. Throughout the text, the interaction of her poems and those of her politically powerful husband and male friends shows that she had a limited voice in public governmental affairs, even though she was well-aware of controversial current events. So, for Margaret, the new form of government is still “tyranic” (l.7): there has been no extreme change for her after America's rebellion against Britain. As she suggests in this line, political oppression—even in the new supposedly more inclusive republic—and her “Fate” as a woman are linked. Both exercise a despotic form of control over her life, as the new government refuses her a voice and social norms dictate that her sex should limit her to a domestic role. But Margaret also develops a “new system” of her own, through networks of literary friends who offered emotional support and intellectual stimulation through writing.

Social themes in the Early Republic

The republican ideology of the post-Revolutionary period changed conceptions of marriage and women's roles. Emphasizing virtue and autonomy, revolutionary language influenced individual women's ideas about their role in marriage and changed social ideology of marriage as an institution. In contrast to the old order where women mostly accepted matches chosen by parents for social and economic reasons, the revolutionary emphasis on rebellion against patriarchal authority gave them more agency to make autonomous choices about whom they married, or even if they would marry at all (Norton 242). In conjunction with women's development of agency in choosing a mate,

the ideal of the companionate marriage also became widely accepted. Companionate marriages promoted the retention of traditional gender roles even as they gestured toward gender equality by emphasizing unions based on mutual love and respect between husband and wife. In practice, these love-based relationships still circumscribed women in a domestic position by relying on their gendered labor and limiting their ability to act independently of their husbands. And as Anya Jabour explains in *Marriage in the Early Republic*, women and men experienced the companionate ideal differently. Men had public roles that gave them an alternative source of fulfillment, while women's entire lives were based on their relationships with their husbands and the domestic roles prescribed by marriage (Jabour 3).

Although the ideal of companionate marriage emphasized egalitarian unions based on mutual love, it actually continued to reinforce gendered inequality through coverture laws. Under these laws, husbands stood in between their wives and the public realm, which kept women from making contracts and voting and made it difficult for them to control property they brought into the marriage.[1] Instead of being true equals, women were linked to their husbands as subjects to a king—ironically, the very relationship early Americans were trying to avoid, both in their government and in the companionate ideal of marriage. Female vulnerability was used to explain women's lack of enfranchisement: it was thought that wives would be manipulated by their husbands

1 New Jersey's voting laws for women are an exception to this rule. Originally, women were given voting rights due to obscure wording in the state constitution in 1776. Many women came forward to vote in the 1780s as a result of this loophole, and in 1790 it was made more official. Women could vote until 1807, when a bill was introduced to disenfranchise women (Norton 191-192).

when voting. Their weakness would be protected by excluding them from political choices (Kerber 139). Feminist critiques of the liberal state explain how women's domestic labor and non-public role were both necessary to and supportive of men's public participation.[2] In individual companionate marriages as in larger society, men depended on women's household production and child rearing to support public roles and perpetuate the new system of government.

Women's domestic duties were elevated in importance through the Republican motherhood, even as this ideology continued to limit them to a private role. As Republican wives and mothers, women could contribute to the good of the country by educating their children and providing positive moral influences on their husbands (Kerber 199-200). Male leaders believed that the success of a republic depended on the virtue of its citizens but had no official capacity to instill moral virtue in the people. Virtue began to be located outside of the state, in churches, schools, and the family, and these female-centered institutions were understood as supporting the male-controlled institution of government (Bloch 150). Ruth Bloch argues that women's virtue had a political significance, as women "continued to embody the collectivist values of classical republicanism after they had ceased to resonate in national politics" (152). By encouraging virtuous wives and mothers, Republican motherhood ideology limited women to a domestic role while utilizing their labor to maintain social stability.

2 See Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America" (205), Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies* (9), and Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom* (12-14).

Early American society was highly concerned with the idea of unity, as lawmakers strove to develop a system of government that would unite the people in a radical new way. The ideology of companionate marriage and Republican motherhood was supposed to provide domestic support for a unified citizenry. But in reality, these seemingly egalitarian ideals created a system with deep, inherent divisions between genders. By relying on women's labor but refusing to allow them a political voice, they created a system that divided everyone in the country based on gender and race. White male property owners were citizens, who had a voice as voters in the development of the country and could hold political office. But along with Native Americans and blacks, women were subjects in relation to the government. They had to live by its rules—and they even contributed to its perpetuation with their domestic labor—but they still lacked the ability to influence government through voting.

Mirroring the importance of unity in the new nation, three variations on the theme of unification arise in the print and manuscript poems of the Page book: political unity in the new country, marital unity for the Pages, and female unity through literary correspondence. These gendered modes of unity are divided in the physical arrangement of the book. The first two, political and marital unity, are discussed in the male section. John uses his poems to express his opinions about how to unify the country. In the same section of poems, he expresses hope for a companionate marriage with Margaret, but he implicitly reveals that he expects to gain both domestic and emotional support through their union. Margaret avoids political and marital themes almost entirely in her poems,

revealing her lack of control over these male-dominated institutions as she carves out an alternative female-centered system of unification through literary correspondence.

Male-dominated systems of marriage and politics circumscribed Margaret in a domestic role in real life, and her seemingly innocuous printed poems about female friendship, labor, and death at first seem to adhere to social expectations of femininity—that she be as pleasing and feminine as a "rose." While the printed poems and journal reveal her involvement in a female literary network, her manuscript revisions allow her to take control of the printed text by writing herself into her husband's political poems and out of his idealistic representations of her in their marriage. Sometimes subversively and sometimes directly, these added "brambles" complicate the male-centered depictions of marriage in the book. The tension of gender-based divisions within the Page book reflects larger problems of the early national society in which the Pages lived. As Margaret re-shapes the book through manuscript additions, she reveals her alienation from male-centered systems of marriage and government that were meant to unify the new nation. In reaction to this exclusion, she creates a female-centered system of social unity through writing that gave her emotional and intellectual support outside of marriage.

The Page Book

The only known copy of the Page book is held in Special Collections at Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. It measures 10x16 centimeters and contains 116 printed pages: twenty-six numbered followed by ninety unnumbered. According to the library's records, it was printed in

1790, soon after the Pages were married. The printed work is divided into three sections, the first two containing Margaret's work and the last containing work by John and at least nine other male writers. The first printed section—and the only section with numbered pages—is a twenty-six page travel journal written by Margaret before her introduction to John. She describes an extended trip to visit friends in New York, addressing her writing to her friend Susan Murray. The next section contains twenty-two poems by Margaret, each of which she signs in manuscript with "M.L." The last section contains sixty poems, most written by John. Other men, including St. George Tucker, Thomas Tudor Tucker, William Nelson, and several anonymous poets also contribute poems. Poems in this section are arranged in groupings alternating between discussions of the Page marriage and politics in Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary America.

Margaret's manuscript additions and changes allow her to disrupt the neatness of the printed sections and the male-centeredness of the content. After printing, she added nine manuscript poems to fill all of the pages that were originally blank. Three poems appear before the journal, one before Margaret's section of poems, one between Margaret's and John's sections, and three after John's section. She also glosses the printed poems by adding titles to many of John's poems that were untitled in print. She assigns authorship to each of John's poems and her own, meticulously marking them with "J.P." or "M.L." The manuscript poems are signed "M.L.P," drawing a clear distinction between the print poems written before her marriage and the manuscript ones written after. She also edited a couple of the poems for punctuation, occasionally changing a word or phrase.

In addition to these glossing and editing marks, Margaret also added her own manuscript title page, in which she appears to debate between a single and a married state.[3] Her original inscription was: "Mr. & Mrs. Page's & Mr. Tucker's poems," but she then crossed out "Mr." and wrote in "Miss Lowther's now" above her own name. Underneath this edited inscription of authorship, she added a more finalized line: "Mr. & Mrs. Page's and Mr. Tucker's Poems." The only dated poem is marked for Washington's birthday on February 22, 1795. It appears to be the last poem added, since she squeezes it into blank spaces around her manuscript title page. If this is the case, Margaret ran out of room to record poems in the printed volume early in her marriage.

The Page Family in Virginia

When Margaret was transplanted to Virginia, she entered a world that her husband dominated socially and politically. Their difference in age and social establishment, as well as the fact that he had been married previously and she had not, meant that Margaret entered a social situation in which she was inherently an outsider. Accordingly, Margaret's life comes into faint focus in history books only when she meets and marries John. The couple met when John was a member of the first meeting of the House of Representatives in New York City in 1789, and they were married on March 27, 1790. Genealogies of the powerful and historic Page family tell of her marriage and children, but her birthdate and earlier life history are lost. According to Page family historians, her father, William Lowther, emigrated from Scotland to New York City

[3] It is possible the book had an original printed title page. If it did, it must have been ripped out shortly after printing for Margaret to feel the need to make a new one.

(Page 80, Warden 145), although the date of his arrival is unknown. Thus, it is unclear whether Margaret was born in Scotland or lived her whole life in New York. Even her birthdate is lost. One genealogy cites it as 1868—a clear typo—but it would make sense if it was supposed to be 1768, making her 22 at the time of her marriage to John (Warden 145). In poetry and letters, Margaret is characterized as being physically youthful and vibrant, further suggesting that she was in her early twenties, the usual marrying age for women in the early republic (Rothman 22-23).

Margaret and John were married three years after the death of John's first wife, Frances Burwell Page. John was in his late forties at the time. Margaret came into an established plantation household that had lacked a female manager for three years. After moving far from her native New York City to a rural plantation, she had to immediately begin supervising servants and slaves in the production of food and household goods and accompanying John to social events with his established group of powerful friends. John had seven surviving children of the twelve Frances had borne, ranging in age from six to twenty-three. Adding to the young children already in the household, Margaret started to bear children right away. Her first daughter, Margaret Lowther, was born in 1790 (Warden 145). She had eight children with John, five of whom survived to maturity.

The Page book shows that Margaret was highly educated and associated with affluent families in New York. When she married John, she gained even more social prominence by joining a historically powerful southern family. The Pages had been involved in colonial politics for five generations, since John Page (John's great great grandfather) emigrated from England and settled in Williamsburg in 1650. He served in

various positions in the colonial government, including a position as the governor's advisor. His descendants became members of the elite planting class in the Tidewater region (Wright 56). Mann Page I, John's grandfather, began building the family estate, called Rosewell, in 1726, which was deemed by a mid-twentieth century historian as "the largest and finest of American houses of the Colonial period" (Waterman 422). It was finally finished in 1744, and John inherited the estate from his father, Mann Page II.

The Pages grew tobacco and held slaves, but by the time John started a family with Frances in 1765, he was constantly in debt, which would persist throughout his life. In 1771, John wrote to John Norton, a London merchant to whom he owed money, that his letters were "full of fair Promises & large Expectations: I fear you begin to suspect my Honour" (Breen 143). Years later in 1795 during his marriage to Margaret, he wrote to St. George Tucker that he had to sell some land and slaves to pay his "gripping creditors" (Leviner 58). While he often was consumed with "his own embarrassed Affairs" as Margaret remembers them in an 1820 letter to her son many years after John's death, the Pages maintained their social standing as a political family inhabiting one of the finest homes in the region.

Despite his constant debt, John was a powerful member of Virginia society in the early republic. Like his ancestors, he was active in government throughout his life. He studied law at the College of William and Mary where he was good friends with Thomas Jefferson.[4] He fought in the French and Indian War under Washington's leadership

4 In a narrative about Rosewell, Lucy Saunders, John and Margaret's youngest daughter, recounts the friendship of her father and Jefferson, remembering how they often looked at stars together on the roof of the house (Waterman 120). In an 1801 letter to Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin, Jefferson

before beginning his political career as lieutenant governor of Virginia in 1776. During the Revolutionary War, he raised a militia in Gloucester and became a colonel. He served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1781-1783 and from 1785-1788. Later he was elected to the first through fourth meetings of Congress, serving from 1789-1797. He became the Governor of Virginia in 1802 and served until 1805, shortly before his death in 1807.[5]

The Pages and Their Literary Circles

The writing in the Page book represents the communication of a variety of sociable groups and literary networks, which Margaret and John entered together and separately. In *Civil Tongues*, David Shields explains that sociable practices, such as salons, clubs, tea tables, and coffeehouses, were important in the British colonies and in the new Republic because they encouraged social conversation and amusement. The Page book contains the correspondence of a sociable network dedicated to belles lettres, a type of occasional writing meant to establish conversation within a group, rather than producing literary pieces for future generations. John, Margaret, St. George Tucker, Thomas Tudor Tucker, William Nelson, Theodorick Bland, and several other anonymous writers took part in this group. They wrote poems on related personal subjects, such as the death of Margaret's sister's canary. They also responded to the form and content of each other's work, as when St. George Tucker wrote a riddle-like poem "after the manner

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explains that he has asked John's advice about the political qualifications of a mutual acquaintance, even though his opinion might not be very useful: "I have known Mr. Page from the time we were boys and classmates together and love him as a brother, but I have always known him to be the worst judge of man existing" (*The Works of Thomas Jefferson* 292).

5 From the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, bioguide.congress.gov.

of Miss Lowther."[6] This heterosocial group might not have considered themselves as formal as a literary salon or club, but the book demonstrates that they read and responded to each other's work.

Since most sociable groups exchanged work in manuscript (Shields xxx), the decision to print the poems privately suggests that members of this group saw value in the permanence of print. They must have exchanged poems in manuscript before the book's printing and probably continued this practice afterwards. Although manuscript circulation was a widespread practice, print was quickly gaining social value with the proliferation of magazines, newspapers, and novels. While the book was printed, it was clearly not meant for circulation beyond their sociable network and their acquaintances. In its original form, before Margaret's additions, few poems were titled and most poems discussed intimate subjects such as Margaret's poetic ability and the Page courtship. And it is possible that the extant volume was the only one printed, perhaps as a wedding gift from John to Margaret.

While the book represents the productions of sociable literary group, it also reproduces political poems John wrote that had been published in newspapers. He and St. George Tucker were both political poets and probably shared their political work with the rest of the group, as the book suggests. The serious, public nature of most of the political work shows, however, that these poems were somewhat separate from the light, friendly communication of the group. Still, John's personal and political exchanges with

6 "Rebus"

Tucker are prevalent throughout the book, and Tucker is even credited by Margaret as the book's third main author.

Tucker was a judge and a professor of law at the College of William and Mary, but he was also known as a poet in Williamsburg society and was often asked to write elegies, poems in celebration of marriages, and patriotic poems to be read aloud (Prince 2). Tucker and John had similar republican political beliefs and also had similar life experiences. Tucker's first wife, Frances Bland Randolph, died in 1788, the year after John's Frances. He remarried in 1791, the year after the Page marriage. Like John, he also served in the House of Representatives and held various other political posts in Virginia (Prince 2-3). Prince notes that Tucker's main literary correspondents were John, Margaret, and William Wirt.[7] Even after John's death, Tucker and Margaret corresponded frequently (Prince 11-12).

Margaret's courtship and marriage with John brought her into his sociable literary group, but it is clear that she had established other literary connections before meeting John and maintained them throughout her life. She notes that one printed poem was "Wrote for the Dreaming Society, of which I was once a member and of which Dr. TL was president." This poem suggests that she was involved in a formal heterosocial literary group in New York. The name of the society sounds similar to post-Revolutionary New York literary clubs that Shields lists, such as the Friendly Society, Calliopean Society, Belles Lettres Club, and Anacreontic Society (312). Margaret

[7] Anya Jabour discusses the courtship of Elizabeth and William Wirt in *Marriage in the Early Republic: Elizabeth and William Wirt and the Companionate Ideal.*

probably already had experience in a group that exchanged belles lettres before she entered John's circle, and she and John were perhaps attracted based on this shared interest.

Margaret's poems and journal indicate that exchanges with literary female friends were far more important than involvement in the heterosocial circle with John and his male friends. While these literary groups circulated light, occasional verses with more concern with sociable exchange than aesthetic quality, Margaret's work addressed to female friends is often more self-consciously literary, as she alludes to discrepancies between her desired role as a poet and her limited role as a woman. In one manuscript poem,[8] she even suggests the permanence of her writing about Washington, depicting herself as a poet-historian whose interpretations will be read by future generations. Margaret circulated her most subversive and female-centered poems within female literary networks, in which women exchanged literary work and commented on skill and craft. Angela Vietto explains that participants often mentored each other as writers and even suggests that literary networks were a form of training in the vocation of writing. Many women sought and obtained publication in newspapers and magazines or had a substantial regional following based on extended manuscript circulation.[9] It is unknown

8 "Written on President Washington's Birth Day, February 22nd 1795." Although this poem cannot be directly identified as part of correspondence with female friends, it does suggest that she valued her work in a historical sense.

9 Vietto notes that women in literary networks often sought evaluation and guidance for their writing from friends, using Susanna Wright, Annis Boudinot Stockton, Hannah Griffitts, and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson as examples (24). Women also created extended audiences by sending poems to each other, and then sending poems again to recipients the author did not know (26). She also argues that the careers of Murray, Morton, and Warren were fostered by participation in literary networks (see Chapter 5).

whether or not Margaret ever attempted publication beyond the Page book, but her work addressed to women often discusses the importance of writing as a craft, moving beyond the idea of exchanging poems for entertainment purposes in polite society.

The extant copy of the book represents Margaret's decision to move her work into a female-centered space. Her manuscript additions are so radical and personal that it is unlikely she would have willingly shared them with her husband or his male friends. So at some point early in their marriage (the last added poem is dated 1795), John must have had little interest in or access to Margaret's printed and revised volume. The additional manuscript poems question the male-centered systems of marriage and politics that John and his friends discuss. These poems illuminate her creation of an alternative female-centered form of support based on literary exchange that can be seen in her print and manuscript work. Through her manuscript additions she is able to speak more honestly and critically of the social system that limited her rights as a woman.

The first two sections of this thesis address male and female conceptions of the interconnected systems of marriage and politics. In the first section, I discuss how the Page book represents problems inherent in the male-centered political system, which proclaimed ideals of freedom but left out anyone who was not white and male. The book demonstrates women's lack of political voice: John includes many political poems that focus on male political decisions, and Margaret can interact with them only in private by titling them in manuscript. These changes allow her to acknowledge her absence and express discontent with a system that subordinated her. Through them she was able to experiment with a political voice, even though it had to remain private. The second

section addresses the book's reflection of early American companionate marriage. While John's abstract depictions of marriage adhere to the companionate ideal and demonstrate male dependence on female labor, Margaret uses manuscript additions to remove herself from these poems, presenting her experience instead in realistic terms as she recognizes "no Muse was ever yet a Wife." Margaret has little to say about marriage in her printed poems, but her manuscript additions show that she was frustrated with a system that offered her no role beyond her domestic duties. Margaret's life was heavily influenced by these male systems of unification, through a political system in which she could have no official voice and a marital system that enforced her limited domestic role.

In the third section, I discuss how Margaret was able to subvert these institutions by creating and maintaining female literary connections. As an elite, educated woman, Margaret used writing to establish intellectual connections with female friends. Print and manuscript poems addressed to female friends operate within the systems of marriage and politics by discussing women's private, domestic roles, but simultaneously subvert the male-centeredness of these social formations by privileging women's thoughts and experiences. Participation in this form of literary female unity came with expectations, though: Margaret offered support for friends who were grieving, advice whether friends requested it or not, and entertainment and intellectual stimulation with her own original work. It seems she expected support in return, as her journal and letters often show her pressuring friends to respond more frequently. Margaret's frustrations with political and marital systems are evident throughout the book, but this early feminist thinker was able

to share her ideas with female friends through writing, creating an alternative system of support when male-centered institutions caused her discontent.

"As I am not much given to discussing Political subjects": Gender in Political Poems

On February 16, 1793, Margaret Lowther Page addressed a letter "To John Page, esq. Representative in Congress. Philadelphia." Sitting at home in Gloucester, Virginia, she writes to her husband on a variety of topics—how much she longs to move to Philadelphia, instructions for ordering their daughter a new pair of shoes, even her aversion to the social custom of delivering calling cards. But in the midst of these domestic concerns, she exclaims, "My dear Husband! our sentiments are similar in most respects, and if we differ in any, 'tis the French Revolution and Universal Equality! which is fortunate–as I am not much given to discussing Political Subjects!" Although she appears to dismiss these differences, she emphasizes two highly-contested issues for republican doctrine in the early 1790s.[10] She makes clear that she has her own political opinions, even though she claims she isn't "given to discussing" them. Throughout the Page book, Margaret makes strategic choices about when and how to discuss political subjects. In the printed section, her rare politically-themed poems glorify Washington,

[10] The initial American response to the French Revolution was positive. Men and women alike showed their support for another nation seeking liberty and a radical form of government based on republican principles (Branson 9, 55-56). In 1793 when this letter was written, opinion was beginning to shift as Americans heard about horrific events that followed the Revolution (Branson 80). Republican thought was supposedly committed to equality, but of course only included white men with a certain amount of property. Margaret might have been suggesting that she believed in a broader understanding of equality, a term that "possessed inherent ambivalence" (Wood 70) in Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary society because it implied that all should be equal but still retained social distinctions of class, gender, and race.

taking part in a popular and accepted practice during his presidency and after his death.[11] These poems position Washington in a protective, fatherly role and give female characters extremely limited agency. But in the privacy of manuscript, she titles many of John's political poems, demonstrating that she was aware of specific events in the new country's government. In one added manuscript poem, Margaret even positions herself as a historian who can interpret current political happenings for future generations. While Margaret must limit most of her political expression to the privacy of manuscript, John includes many political poems in his section, which make clear his political agency and authority.

The differences in Margaret's and John's political poetry reflect disunity between sexes in the new republic, as the new political system marginalized elite women as disenfranchised subjects. Margaret attempts to erase her female authorship, while John is physically present in his poems, using a confident "I" to assert his opinions. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's discussion of gendered ideas of the body arising in the eighteenth century illuminates these differences. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, people started to imagine a strict, binary division between male and female bodies (Dillon 12). Women's bodies came to be seen as an encumbrance, understood as penetrable and impregnatable in opposition to men's stable, autonomous biology. Decision-making was the primary mode of involvement in the new liberal state, and women were assumed to be

11 Max Cavitch discusses "the poetry of public mourning" (251) for Washington in "The Man That Was Used Up: Poetry, Particularity, and the Politics of Remembering George Washington." Page's poems honoring Washington are part what Cavitch identifies as a national movement to glorify him both before and after his death.

"prepolitical" (Dillon 14), unable to make such decisions because of their physical difference from men.

As Margaret deflects attention from her sex as a writer in printed political poems, she adheres to her expected role as a disenfranchised subject, who has no voice in government because of her female body. In contrast, John's physical presence in his poems reflects his position as a citizen with the right to make choices and even influence others' choices. Ironically, the goal of John's political poems is to explain political decisions that he thinks will unite and strengthen the country, but the system he proposes excludes Margaret, just as the book itself relegates her work to a separate section where political topics are unacceptable. While Margaret's adherence to traditional female roles in printed political poems supports this inherently flawed vision of "unity," she can only imagine her involvement in a public, political realm through the privacy of manuscript.

Margaret's printed political poem "On the Recovery of the President of the United States from a Dangerous Illness" demonstrates her subordinated identity in relation to the government as she depicts a passive scene of female mourning for Washington. The female characters, called "virtues" (l.2), represent domestic caregivers who might have tended the sick. They do not even enact this traditional female role; instead they passively hope for the recovery of their male protector. Each of the figures has a name that connotes a positive, potentially powerful trait, but her actions oppose it. Liberty, a representation of America's newfound independence, mourns that Washington "No longer charms each fear away" (l.6). Benevolence, who should focus on the good of others, can "scarce check her tears" (l. 9); Connubial Love, perhaps a reference to

happiness in marriage, is in anguish; Patience is anxious; Justice is gloomy; Fortitude is in danger; and Charity "wept like a child" (l.20).

The names Margaret gives the female characters reflect the neo-classical convention of using characters from classical stories in verse, such as Hope, Columbia, and Charity. Borrowing female figures from classical stories was a popular practice for female poets of the early Republic, as Caroline Winterer explains in *The Mirror of Antiquity*. For elite early Americans, classical stories, images, and characters associated with ancient Greco-Roman republics provided a way to discuss the developing system of government. While only men learned Latin and Greek, during and after the Revolution women began to contribute to classical conversations (14). Many elite women learned classical stories by reading books owned by brothers, husbands, or fathers, and prescriptive literature of the time advised women on how to acquire some classical learning, but not too much (15). Women borrowed names of classical female figures when signing letters and publishing, wrote about how their activities in the new Republic related to those of ancient women, and sat for portraits in Roman clothing (41). Winterer argues women's knowledge of classical texts gave them the language to enter political discourse (41). When Margaret invokes classical figures such as Charity, placing them around the bedside of a powerful and respected political leader, she takes part in this practice in a particularly safe way. The use of these female figures also helps her cover up her own body as a writer, allowing her to maintain a distanced narrative voice.

The allusion to the classical story of Charity shows how Margaret emphasized the passivity of these characters in relation to the powerful Washington. Elite men and

women were familiar with classical texts, and Margaret and her friends would have recognized her reference to this classical story of filial dedication, in which Charity feeds her jailed father from her breast until he is set free. Caroline Winterer notes that this story was often used in the early Republic as a "platform for arguing women's sensibility and intelligence" (79), since Charity takes action against the mandate of the state. Margaret makes the figure of Charity much more passive in her poem, placing her in tears at a father figure's bedside. In the classical story and in Margaret's poem, Charity has a female role as a dutiful daughter, but here Margaret actually removes her original agency. While the poem discusses a powerful male political figure, it adheres to traditional, limited roles for women, in relation to individual men and the government as a whole.

At the end of the poem, Hope arrives to tell the mourners that their prayers have healed Washington. By embodying a stereotypical position as emotional, inactive female mourners, they have "Restored to health" (l.25) their male protector. Margaret's emphasis on the traditional femininity of the "virtues" surrounding Washington reflects the transfer of ideals of civic virtue from male-centered political institutions to female-centered homes, schools, and churches. As Bloch explains, these institutions supported the government by enforcing virtuous behavior after the development of a market economy began to emphasize masculine profit and self-interest instead of the civic virtue and self-sacrifice of the Revolutionary period (152). Women, then, became emblems of highly-valued virtue, especially through caregiver roles as Republican wives and mothers. Margaret uses classical language to discuss a political subject, but she makes

her poem even more acceptable to male readers by giving the female figures extremely traditional and powerless roles. Her depiction of these figures might even have been a subversive commentary on women's lack of political power. Whatever the case, Margaret is uncomfortable positioning herself as a writer in relation to the powerful and protective Washington. She allows herself to write by removing herself from the poem, becoming an omniscient narrator who describes the interactions of Washington and the female characters.

Margaret's only other printed political poem in the book further complicates her need to disembody herself to comment on male political leaders. Although she is physically present in the poem as a member of a crowd celebrating Washington's inauguration, she finds it hard to single herself out as a writer addressing this historic event. Instead, she is much more comfortable expressing a sense of communal joy—in effect, blending into the crowd. The poem's lengthy title, edited in her own pen after the book's publication, reveals her conflicted feelings about discussing the inauguration in writing: "The following ~~elegant~~ lines written by ~~Miss Margaret Lowther~~, of New York, to her friend in Pennsylvania, on his requesting her to send him a Poem, upon the arrival of General Washington in that city, as President of the United States."[12] Her poem celebrates Washington's presidency, but she is careful to explain that it was requested by a male friend. After the poem was printed, she attempted to erase her female authorship by crossing out her name and questioned the quality of her work by marking out

12 This poem appears first in Margaret's section and is the only piece in which authorship is attributed to Margaret in print.

"elegant." Even in the title, she attempts to remove herself from the poem and apologizes for her writing.

As the poem begins, she takes on the persona of "a simple muse, unskilled in rules" (l.3), asking if she should "Presume to celebrate the auspicious day" (l.5) of Washington's inauguration.[13] Although she draws attention to her female sex by recognizing her role as an audience member, when she attempts to speak about the event she retreats to the classical female persona of a muse, similar to the female virtues in her poem about Washington's sickness. Hiding behind this traditional poetic persona, she pads the poem with several lines explaining that she usually writes more "humble strains" (l.13), and that she has written this politically-themed poem only to "obey" her male friend. In her hesitancy to address this political event, she expresses her own sense of disconnection from the country's government. She can participate comfortably in the larger group, describing "what we felt when we the Chief beheld" (l.17), but she appears very uncomfortable with participation in a public realm through political poetry. In this role, she needs to erase her name and take on an emblematic muse persona. Even if this was simply a facade to make her poem more acceptable, it illuminates her disenfranchised position.

These two poems do not directly critique the exclusion of her voice from the government, but they do point to her disenfranchisement as they highlight her difficulty in discussing political men. As the inauguration poem shows, Margaret found it extremely difficult to identify her voice as female while making comments on political

13 Washington was inaugurated in New York City on April 30, 1789.

men. While she becomes a muse in this poem and is able to speak (albeit apologetically) through this figure, her poem on Washington's illness constitutes female figures supporting the state through their subordination. It is only in manuscript that Margaret can more directly express her political knowledge.

Margaret's and John's differing use of female characters in their poems reflect the conflicted position of elite women in the new republic. Margaret struggles to place women in relation to the powerful Washington and ultimately must retreat to representing traditional, passive female roles. Female characters are rare in John's political poems, included only as negative emblems. While he directly references his own political actions and opinions, as well as those of friends and rivals, he never allows a particular woman near the scenes of state he discusses. Instead, women can only *represent* a country or a mother figure. Margaret and John both show how difficult it was to imagine women's involvement in politics. John's poetry speaks about unification through republican notions of equality, but even as it embraces this ideal, it contributes to the discursive construction of an exclusionary system.

John and St. George Tucker both wrote poems that criticized Washington's administration, which they believed was strengthening and centralizing government in a dangerous way (Prince 16). In a June 1793 letter from the beginning of his third session of Congress, John mourns that "Our general govt. as it is called was rushing headlong into monarchy. I hope the new Congress will check this madness." The poems I will discuss were written throughout his career in Virginia and national politics. In them he puts forth ideas that will unify the country while giving power to the general citizenry—

who are, of course, white men. Mirroring the political system, these poems centralize the white male body while marginalizing female bodies.[14]

In a poem written sometime during his membership in the Virginia House of Delegates,[15] John speaks confidently about his political leadership. Margaret gives the poem a lengthy explanatory title after publication: "On the opposition of the Legislature of Virginia to a general [illegible] for the support of Religion. Address'd to the Printer of the Virginia Gazette." John asserts himself directly as the poem begins: "You will receive, I do suppose / What I shall write, tho' not in prose" (ll.1-2). From the beginning, John is physically present in his poem. He goes on to demand that his poem be taken seriously and printed where many people will see it: "I do expect to meet a scorner, / So do not give me Poet's Corner" (ll.5-6). John seems to realize that his verse form might be taken lightly, but he has confidence that his political ideas are important for the public to see. He conflates himself with the poem as he asks that the printer, "Place *me* in more conspicuous view" (ll.7, emphasis added). In direct contrast to Margaret's impulse to hide behind a muse persona, John wants his poem—and himself—to be seen. Writing about political themes, John is present and in control, whereas Margaret must constantly apologize and direct attention away from her sex as a writer.

As John asserts that religion helps control the populace and argues that church leaders should be salaried by the state, he personifies religion as a Republican mother

14 John's political views were focused on equality, but this ideal was actually only meant for propertied white men. Federalists favored the elite, but were much more accepting of women's political opinions, as long as they were elite women (Zagarri, *Gender and the First Party System* 118-119).

15 John served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1781-1788 (*bioguide.congress.gov*)

figure, a civilizing female force that keeps her "sons" (l.24) from indulging in "Unbridled lust and lawless power" (l.25). For this powerful male poet who "wields" (l.10) his pen, the female figure of religion helps him prove his point. Identifying himself with the reader, he urges, "Let's first consider what's *her use*" (l.21). He decides that religion should be employed by the government because without her, "The state would find her sons a pest" (l.24). Just as the ideal of the Republican mother gave women the political role of nurturing virtuous citizens, religion can help produce moral American men in this poem. And as women are circumscribed in traditional roles that support the success of the state (like Margaret's female mourners), religion's influence maintains public virtue. Without religion, "Her sacred influence would cease, / To guard our sweet domestic peace" (ll.27-28). John's view of a peaceful, unified citizenry rests on the subordination of the female figure of religion, whose role bears strong resemblance to the Republican mother, an ideal domestic female role prescribed by early Republican society.

In a poem written shortly after the first session of Congress began in March of 1789, John appeals to the common *man*, but distinctly ignores women. In "On Reading a Piece in one of the New York Gazettes, denying the right of the People to instruct their Representatives or to have Committees," he argues that town meetings and local committees are important to the governmental process because they keep the power of the state in check. By consistently using plural pronouns like "our" and "we," he places himself within the poem, but also puts himself on the same level as the general citizens. He believes, "That *people* may meet, and consult when they please, / On the good of the state when their leaders them tease" (ll.3-4). This poem is written in response to a piece

in the paper written by “a very wise man” (l.5) who suggests that rule by the people “'Twill stir up sedition and insolence great, / Which will one day or other endanger the state” (ll.7-8). According to his republican principles, John supported enfranchisement of most white men, as opposed to the Federalists who favored the elite.[16]

John continues to separate women from the system of government by equating Britain with traditional feminine weakness. The female figure of Britain is encumbered by monarchy and loathes the idea of government by the people, which caused the colonists to rebel: “For *she* knows what dire wars this maxim did bring, / And divided her kingdom, distracted her king” (ll.25-26). In contrast to Britain's feminine weakness, American citizens “have not Nobles nor kinglings nor Kings, / Nor will we be pester'd by any such things” (11.29-30). Instead, they are “freemen” who “have right to new model their state / When their servants grow proud, or would be too great” (ll. 37-38). He positions himself and other lawmakers as servants of the people, who should be replaced if they start to monopolize the government or stop listening to voters. As he glorifies the democratic system of government he thinks will unite and strengthen the country, he reveals the same kind of division that keeps Margaret out of his printed poems in the book and circumscribed in a domestic realm in her life. “Freemen” are the ones with the power to shape government. In John's conception of Republican ideals, women are most closely related to “children and fools,” set in contrast to enfranchised “constituents” (l.39) whose opinions should be valued and respected by their political representatives.

16 States had varying stipulations requiring property ownership for voters, which limited the lowest classes from voting. They wanted to be sure that all enfranchised men were invested in the community, because they believed that unpropertied or wayfaring men might be easily bribed to sell their vote.

The depiction of feminine Britain's weakness under an oppressive government bears ironic resemblance to Margaret's vision in her opening manuscript poem of an American government that “reign[s] as despotic as tyranic Fate!” (l.7). It is easy for John to ignore real women in this poem because they have no involvement in political decisions, and feminine weakness seems to be a successful insult to the degeneration of Britain under monarchy. While he gives freemen power in this poem, he ignores the fact that for women like Margaret, not much changed in their relationship to the government when the colonies split from Britain. John discusses the importance of governance at the local level by freemen, but he ignores that for women, the government is still “tyrannic” in its refusal to hear their voices.

John includes fifteen other political poems in the volume, and most of them address similar republican themes. With his confident presence in his poems, he demonstrates how much power he has as a male politician. While he frequently includes his “constituents” in his vision of the country's unity and equality, he fails to recognize how many people he is actually leaving out. His use of female characters as weak and traditional emblems further shows how real women were necessary to the government because they supported it with their labor, but always subordinate to it. In the privacy of manuscript, though, Margaret is able to insert herself into her husband's political poems, demonstrating her political knowledge by giving them titles. While this private manuscript practice certainly did not make an immediate change in her ability to participate in politics, it demonstrates her discontent and allows her to step out of her domestically-themed section to experiment with her own political voice.

In its original printed form, the book included many poems by John that were untitled and would have been hard to understand if the reader was outside of the Page literary circle. Margaret's practice of titling his poems so that they are understandable for those unfamiliar with political events reflects her political knowledge. For instance, Margaret gives one poem the simple title, "Parody on the Religious Bill Passed in Virginia."[17] Unless the reader could talk to John or was involved directly in Virginia politics, it would be hard to understand the clever satire that follows in print. Even though she adds titles to political poems in the privacy of manuscript, she seems to have an audience in mind, as her notations guide the reader through a series of mostly untitled poems. Perhaps she intended to circulate the edited book to female friends, or maybe she was even thinking of future readers. Whatever the case, she uses the privacy of manuscript to alter her husband's previously published poems and display her political knowledge.

Margaret titles seven of John's fifteen political poems. She titles other poems as well, many of which have domestic themes, such as "On the untimely Death of a Son, Drowned in 1782."[18] A few titles offer her own critique of the poem's subject matter, including "Written in Answer to a Stupid Invective against sleep, which abounded with false concord, and other grammatical inaccuracies." One of her political titles, "To a Gentleman who wished that Christianity could be abolished, and with that view was for

17 This poem probably refers to Thomas Jefferson's "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom," which supported separation of church and state. As the above poem shows, John disagreed with his friend's idea.

18 John probably wrote this poem about a son from his marriage to Frances, also named John, who was born in 1773 and would have been nine at the time of his tragic death.

encouraging certain enthusiastic secretaries," participates in critiquing the idea of separating church and state, as she adopts a sarcastic, condescending tone and pokes fun at Thomas Jefferson, an avid supporter of separation of church and state, who became Secretary of State in 1789. For most of the political poems, though, she simply gives an explanation of her husband's poems and does not offer an opinion. She begins this trend when she titles John's very first poem, which discuses Jonathan Edwards's *The Freedom of the Will*: "Sent to a Gentleman who had lent the Author "Edwards on Free-Will" and requested his opinion of it." Margaret might have read Edwards and had opinions of her own, but this title serves only to introduce John's ideas. Although it appears that Margaret generally echoes John's ideas, titling the poems allows her to show that she knew what they were discussing, even if she cannot directly give an opinion.

Many of the political poems John left untitled address the place of religion in the new government. These poems give Margaret room to discuss political subjects only if they discuss virtue and morality, just as her female role supported the government by guarding morality. "On Reading a Piece in one of the New York Gazettes, denying the right of the People to instruct their Representatives or to have Committees," discussed above, and "On the Motion of the Senate of the United States to confer a Title on the President" address John's beliefs about critical issues in the new government, and he must have thought them important enough to title in print. Several others that are titled in print note that they were previously published, showing that John had a public political voice as a writer. In contrast, "Occasioned by a breach of Faith in one of the Legislatures of the United States of America," titled by Margaret, is a short poem that speaks to the

importance of republican moral virtue in politicians. Several of John's poems discuss the place of religion in the new government and indicate that he found religion an important political issue. When Margaret titled these, she exercised her political knowledge without stepping too far outside the bounds of her expected virtuous role.

Margaret's added manuscript poem, "Written on President Washington's Birth Day February 22nd 1795" takes part in the tradition of glorifying Washington, but allows her much more agency to discuss specific political issues.[19] As she depicts herself as a poet-historian, she subtly suggests that she can use her knowledge of current events to control the way political figures of the early Republic are remembered, even if she cannot influence governmental decisions. Unfortunately, the first line of the poem is torn, and reads: "_____ held the Volume of the Past / And o'er each Page his sanction cast" (l. 1-2). The mystery male character holding the volume is reading a story about a famous man "Long hallowed at the Font of Fame" (l.4) when the female figures Truth and Virtue come to extend the book of history by adding Washington to it. They celebrate Washington's birthday, shedding "new radiance" upon history and singing "In heavenly Record of this Day" (l.10).

The poem also discusses gendered forms of power. After the entrance of Truth and Virtue, Margaret makes an abrupt jump to juxtaposing "mighty Time," whose empire

19 Although John did not agree with Washington politically, Margaret still engages in the practice of honoring him in verse. The Page family also had a personal relationship with the Washingtons. In a 1795 letter written when Margaret was living in Philadelphia with John, she wrote to her sister about attending a dinner given by the Washingtons, at which Martha was "kind and attentive to me." She also wrote about her annoyance when another guest "took me for a visitor of Nelly's," Martha's granddaughter, who would have been 16 at the time.

"Was, Is, and shall thro' Ages last" (l. 12), with "Nature" who kneels at the shrine of Time. Here, a gendered division places feminine Nature as a subject in subservience to the kingly, masculine figure of Time. With this image, Margaret acknowledges the passivity and powerlessness of a traditional female role, particularly in relation to government. In the next lines, though, she makes another gendered comparison to show how humans will never fully understand Time: "And tho' the dark and mystic veil / O'er Penetration must prevail" (ll.17-18), poetry, or "Fancy" can help people understand Time better. A veil, an article of clothing associated with modesty and femininity, is drawn over Time to prevent a masculine penetration of its secrets. Here, femininity has power over masculinity, if only as an obscuring force. The power of knowledge is also feminine: Fancy can make eternity more understandable as she "glance[s] at once, 'from Earth to Heaven'" (l.20). Fancy looks through Time's "various Page" (l.21) at the "wond'rous History of Man," (l.22) but is especially excited "as to the present Day she turns" (l.24). At this point, the figure of Fancy gets conflated with the speaker:

> For I well pleased each look illume
> And dissipate the envious gloom
> By Faction rais'd, abhorred Fiend!
> In vain the Shade has intervened,
> The fleeting mist has pass'd away
> And but more brilliant made This Day!
>
> 25-30

With the sudden introduction of and emphasis on the personal pronoun "I," Margaret takes the place of Fancy in flipping through the "Volume of the Past," adding herself as a "Page" to the book by writing about Washington. She also "dissipate[s] the envious

gloom" of political factions that emerged in the 1790s. As she interprets history, she chooses to obscure this political event. In this poem, unlike her printed political poems, she directly references her political knowledge.

Just as she is hesitant to assert her opinions about political subjects in titling John's poems, in this poem she quickly moves away from discussing political factions. Still, she depicts herself deciding how to record history, recognizing that she can shape it through her poetry. In titling John's poems, she also engages in the practice of recording history by making the poems accessible to an outside audience, even if most of her titles reflect her husband's views. While she could not make political decisions, Margaret does give herself agency as a recorder of history in her manuscript additions. Unlike the passive female figures of her poem on Washington's illness, she takes action in entering the male section and depicting herself as a poet-historian. With her manuscript additions, she demonstrates her political knowledge and suggests that she can communicate with future generations as a poet-historian.

"Safe as doves in downy nest": Representations of Marriage

In "An Anacreontic on Beauty," late in the male section, Theodorick Bland addresses Margaret in John's voice. He praises her as the "sweetest bud of life's gay flower" (l.2) and asks that she hurry to his embrace, before time can "eat and kill the bud of youth" (l.12), as her beauty fades with age. He asks:

> Then, whilst thou bearest all thy charms,
> Come, come and bless my longing arms;
> There in safety you may rest,
> Safe as doves in downy nest.
> 13-16

Bland imagines himself as John, offering Margaret the protection of marriage while praising her physical beauty. The poem implies that Margaret needs this security, and that the only asset she can offer in exchange is her appearance. In reality, she would give much more: her labor to keep Rosewell running, and her body to produce eight children, both of which kept her from intellectual pursuits.

Much of the male section is dedicated to discussing the upcoming Page marriage in whimsical, idealistic terms, similar to Bland's poem. John's courtship with Margaret prompted him and his literary circle to exchange verses in celebration. While political poems in the male section leave Margaret out entirely, as I have shown, in the marriage poems Margaret is highly represented. Tellingly, John and his friends glorify her as an inspirational, abstract muse figure, speaking of her only in terms of how she will improve John's life and ignoring her perspective on marriage entirely. The men in John's literary circle actively construct a male-centered view of marriage, in which Margaret serves John and has very little power. In the political poems Margaret had to use manuscript to insert herself and her knowledge into John's exclusionary systems. Her added marriage poems, on the other hand, counter John's idealistic representations of marriage, instead constructing a female-centered view of domestic labor.

The marriage poems demonstrate the social-political system of the early republic in microcosm, showing how a society concerned with perfect unions—in marital relationships of individuals and for the country as a whole—actually relied on a system that was inherently divided along gender lines. On an individual level, men with public

roles like John depended on the household production of their wives to be able to perform their public role. Without the responsibilities of producing clothes and food, managing labor on an estate, or rearing children, they were free to perform their public duties. On a larger social level, as I have explained, the political system depended on women's labor for production of a virtuous citizenry. John's interweaving of political and marriage poems, then, is especially reflective of the larger society in which the book was produced. Although his section seems to switch abruptly back and forth in subject matter, his political career is very closely related to the inspiration—and the source of domestic labor—that he finds in Margaret.

The Page book honors Margaret's poetic skill while also welcoming her into a new social role both as the wife of a political leader and as a member of a new social circle of poets. But John's relatively recent loss of his first wife throws a shadow over their courtship, as both Margaret and John reveal in their poems. Frances enters their poetry as John mourns and Margaret sympathizes—but the courtship poems also suggest that Frances's role as John's wife is now open and Margaret is there to fill it. Regardless of how Margaret might have felt about being expected to replace John's late wife—as a household manager and an emotional supporter—this equation between Margaret and Frances further emphasizes the importance of women's roles as republican wives and mothers. While John seemed to care deeply for both Frances and Margaret, he nonetheless saw them as filling a role that was necessary for his own happiness and well-being.

An exchange between Thomas Tudor Tucker[20] and John further illuminates the interconnection of marriage and government, alluding to Margaret's loss of social and economic rights as she enters a role that will support John. Tucker asks how long it will be until "P---e and his Peggy are *one*." John answers that ten days must pass before "the day which makes Peggy my own" in "Written in the H------e of R-------p--------s March 17, 1790." The language of this exchange points to the connection of marriage and government through coverture, as Tucker depicts John and Margaret becoming "one," and John claims ownership of Margaret upon their wedding day, demonstrating the lack of social and economic rights women had once married under the laws of the new government. In his title he claims to write the poem, on the sly, in a meeting of Congress, further demonstrating the connection between his political career and his personal life. Juxtaposing scenes of darkness and widespread destruction with images of carefree peace inspired by Margaret, he constitutes her as a gentle and stabilizing influence on his life. In the midst of destructive forces, as "thunders should shake the whole land" (l.10), and "wolves should be prowling around" (l.18). Margaret is a creative one, "sunshine" who helps John "clearly...see / On earth and to heaven my way" (ll.7-8). Margaret lifts John out of his sadness over Frances, once more giving him the support—both emotional and domestic—that he needs to perform his political duties.

Although the companionate ideal emphasized marital unity based on mutual love and a sense of equality between male and female roles, exchanges between John and his male friends depict a view of marriage that is centered on John, ignoring real-life

20 Thomas Tudor Tucker was St. George Tucker's brother.

consequences for Margaret. A playful exchange of poems about a male canary whose mate has died shows how the male writers in the book see marriage existing for their own purposes and well-being. John's first two canary poems appear early in his section, representing his thoughts about entering a new courtship with Margaret about two years after Frances' death. In the first, “Epitaph on Mrs. M's Canary bird,” a friend's pet bird has lost his mate and feels “half dead with widow'd grief” (l.7). His mistress can make him feel better if she will “provide for him another mate, / He'll think no more of his hard fate” (ll.21-22). John's sympathy with the male bird in the poem causes him to arrive at the conclusion that any other female bird can replace the one that was lost. As the title indicates, he begins the poem by providing a short epitaph for the female bird:

> Underneath this stone doth lie,
> As sweet a bird, as e'er did fly,
> Which when alive did comfort give,
> To as sweet a bird as e'er did live.
> 1-4

Just as the poem that follows focuses on the male bird's feelings of loneliness, the epitaph emphasizes the female bird's ability to give “comfort” to her male mate. After this short epitaph, the rest of the poem concentrates on how the male bird can have his comfort restored, which will come through gaining a new female mate.

In the poem that follows, John's conflicted feelings about beginning a courtship with Margaret demonstrate his ideas about the power structures involved in forming a marital union. Even in his grief, he has agency to choose a mate, while Margaret has the agency to enter a union only because she is desirable at the height of her youthful beauty.

He is “pensive like your sister's bird” (l.5) but feels that he cannot find another partner as easily as the canary, who will take any mate he is given. While the first poem has a printed title, this one is addressed “To Miss” in Margaret's hand. John depicts Margaret as a youthful and energetic woman who walks “with light fantastic toe” (l.1), while he can only “cough and sigh and hardly know, / How to hold up my head” (ll.3-4). He draws attention to Margaret's physicality, asking her to “sprightly dance thou lovely maid, / The fav'rite of each muse, / For whom each feeling youth has pray'd, / Whom ev'ry wit would choose” (ll.21-24). Highlighting her physical beauty and poetic skill in opposition to his age, he suggests that she is desirable to many young men—particularly “wits,” or poets, who would find her as inspirational as a muse. He seems conflicted about entering a courtship, mourning that he can never recover from Fanny's death and instead “a widower I must die!” (l.20). Eventually he changes his mind, appealing to her as a poet by asking her to “Let th' accomplished swain impress / Thine heart with mutual love” (ll.27-28). In addition to giving himself much more agency in choosing to begin the relationship, he also establishes the power structure of their relationship by emphasizing his age and experience. Although Margaret would have had some choice of her husband in real life, in this poem John portrays her as being admired by many men but having no interest in anyone but him. Ultimately he decides that Margaret can restore him just as a new mate would for the male canary. In this first poem discussing their relationship, Margaret emerges as a beautiful, inspirational, passive figure who is desirable as a wife. Although he uses the language of the companionate ideal—

emphasizing love and potential happiness—in this poem the power in the relationship is directly in his hands.

Much later in the section, the discussion of the canary resumes in order for John and his friends to discuss the upcoming Page marriage, again from a male perspective. In "Queries to Mrs. M'L-------e,"[21] a poet identified as "I.P." asks "Has the lovely Linnet[22] yet, / His partner with caresses met? / Does he lay aside all care, / And sprightly as bride-groom appear?" (ll.1-4). Again focusing on feelings of happiness the male bird might have if he can "marry" his new mate, this poem positions the female as "The sweetest comfort of kind Heav'n" (l.10). She exists only to make the male bird happy, reflecting how John sees Margaret as available for courtship if he wants her in "To Miss." Following the "Queries" is another poem by I.P, "Epithalamium. On the Marriage of the Canary Bird alluded to in page the 23d." Referencing the earlier two canary poems, I.P. honors the canary marriage by writing in the manner of a song from Greek lyric poetry sung during wedding festivities. He depicts a celebration for the marriage of the two birds as "each tenant of the grove" sings congratulations (l.1). He imagines their married life using images of classical deities, starting as Hymen, the Greek god of marriage, lights "Another torch" (l.13). Next, Lucina, the Roman goddess of childbirth, is asked to "be present when each egg is laid" (l.20). Apollo is called on to protect the young as they grow up, "when they first essay their flight" (l.23). I.P. draws attention to the function of marriage and the family in producing productive citizens, emphasizing the importance

21 Apparently, the canary belonged to Margaret's sister, Mrs. McLaine.

[22] Linnets and canaries are a similar kind of bird of the finch species. The poets appear to use the terms interchangeably.

not only of childbirth, but also of the "flight" of the young, as they enter society. He also uses a classical reference to emphasize the importance of mutual love, as Venus, the goddess of love, "on linnets hence shall smile" (l.28) because she is so pleased with this marriage. As he uses classical allusions to describe the important aspects of the canary marriage, I.P reproduces the larger social connection between marriage and government.

This poem is followed by a short, untitled poem by St. George Tucker that responds directly to I.P's discussion of Venus blessing the canaries. Tucker notes that even though Venus is traditionally associated with doves, now "Her Doves shall be forgotten too, / And Linnets teach us how to woo"(ll.7-8). The exchange about the canaries extends throughout the book and involves John, I.P, and Tucker. For these three men, the representation of the canary marriage was an amusing and apt metaphor for John's relationship with Margaret. The language of the canary poems suggests that even in the new ideal of the companionate marriage, male needs—for individuals and in the country as a whole—dictated that women should supply domestic and emotional support.

The canary poems subtly suggest that Frances and Margaret are somewhat interchangeable, although John does explain that it is harder for him to find a new mate than for the canary. Tucker continues to position Margaret as a replacement for Frances in "SGT to his friend JP, on his marriage with Miss L------r," and his language suggests that Margaret will fill Frances's role not only physically, but also in terms of domestic labor. Just as the canary was brought out of his grief with a new mate, Tucker tells John that his marriage will restore "thy peace of mind" by bringing back "those blessings which you once enjoy'd" (l.2). He is not specific about the blessings, but for an elite,

slave-holding couple in the late eighteenth century they might include mutual love and support, raising and educating children, supervising the servants and slaves that produced food and clothes for the family, and attending John at social events as an intelligent, educated woman. Tucker goes on to hope that everything about “thy Fanny's form, or face, or mind” (l.10) will be present in Margaret, so that “in HER, thy Fanny's self shall be restor'd, / And e'en on earth, shall triumph o'er the grave!” (ll.15-16). Tucker focuses on Frances' physical and mental aspects, but eventually asks that Margaret embody everything about “Fanny's self” (l.15). This extension to the whole “self” essentially means that Margaret should do everything that Frances did, which includes the domestic labor that supports John's public role. Tucker probably did not have this in mind, but in situating Margaret as a replacement, he operates under the assumption that women have specific, set roles in marriage.

Part of the idealization of Margaret's new role as a wife in the male poems comes in positioning her as an inspirational muse figure, emblematic of women's moral virtue. With this move, Margaret's existence is still centered around her husband, but the tedium and limitations of her role are largely ignored. Two poems celebrate Margaret's poetic ability by constructing her as a muse, uniting her to John as a poet who needs inspiration. Margaret mimics this construction in one courtship poem, but in her added manuscript poems she mocks these idealistic expectations. Together with the marriage poems, these poems that glorify Margaret as a muse continue to show that John and his friends experienced marriage as an institution that centered on them and their needs. Emblematic, celebratory, and abstract language constructs a view of marriage that eliminates real-life

problems, but Margaret's manuscript poems give a glimpse into how she experienced everyday inequalities in marriage.

"Fragment of an Irregular Ode" and "The Tenth Muse" follow the pattern of positioning John and Margaret as poet and muse. John establishes this metaphorical relationship in "To Miss," giving himself power as a poet who uses Margaret's inspiration to produce his work. The first muse poem, "Fragment of an Irregular Ode," is written by an anonymous male friend, but inexplicably appears in Margaret's section.[23] It depicts Margaret as a new American muse, in a land "Where Liberty celestial maid, / Has fix'd her adamantine feat" (ll.1-2). In this new land, Apollo, the leader of the muses, decides there are too many new ideas for the original nine muses: "For themes too vast he adds another muse; / And bids the modest Lowther to aspire, / To be the tenth, nor durst the maid refuse" (11.10-12). Margaret embodies the ladylike quality of humility, but she accepts the honored position of being a new muse. By positioning her as a muse who inspires male bards, the anonymous author simultaneously praises Margaret's writing ability and removes all of her agency as a poet.

The second to last poem in the male section, "The Tenth Muse," is strikingly similar to "Fragment of an Irregular Ode," continuing to use neoclassical conventions that imply Margaret's subordination to John. The poem is prefaced with the disclaimer: "The following piece was written by a gentleman who had not seen the fragment, page 8th." The similarity of these two poems suggests that the male poets in John's circle,

23 After the book's publication, Margaret signed each of her printed poems "M.L." This is the only unsigned poem in her section.

including St. George Tucker, Thomas Tudor Tucker, William Nelson,[24] and others who remain anonymous, must have discussed Margaret as a muse at length, just as they used the canary story to discuss the Page marriage. In this poem, the construction of Margaret as a figure who inspires male poetry is more concrete than in "Fragment of an Irregular Ode." The anonymous "gentleman" begins by alerting male poets that there is now an additional muse available for their use: "Poets now increase your muses, / Ev'ry bard must sing of ten" (ll.1-2). After the male poets know that Margaret can serve them, he moves to praising her work: "Genius ev'ry thought infuses, / Genius guides her attic pen" (ll.3-4). As he praises her, he also restricts her to a position of serving male poets. Alluding to classical and neoclassical muse invocation, the author asks, "Oh wouldst thou *our* lays inspire, / *We* would chant the choral song" (ll.7-8, emphasis added). Unlike muses invoked in traditional neoclassical poetry, though, it is clear in this poem that Margaret is a poet in her own right. According to the writer, in her poetry "Themes sublime in Milton's spirit, / Here with sportive Comus meet" (ll.9-10). She writes with the range of ability that Milton demonstrated: from serious, religious themes to light, entertaining verses. Relating Margaret's poetry to Milton's is high praise, but she still emerges from the poem in the conventional role of a muse who inspires male poets.

For all their praise, the construction of Margaret as a muse in these two poems reinforces the gendered inequality of late eighteenth-century marriage. The male poets

24 John and Thomas Nelson began their lifelong friendship as boys while attending the Peaseley School in Gloucester (Evans 15). Five of John's children from his first wife married Thomas' children (Warden 143). There were three William Nelsons in the family: a brother, cousin, and son to Thomas, and one of these must have contributed a poem to the Page volume.

look to her for the purpose of inspiration; John expects her to secure his happiness in marriage; the male canary stops mourning when he gets a new female mate. In her emblematic role as a muse, Margaret was constructed as an inspirational force. In real life as well, she was expected to relieve John from depression and restore his happiness, as poems such as “Written in the H-----e” show. In constructing Margaret in an inspirational, male-focused role, the male poets fail to consider how marriage will affect her.

In the semi-public medium of print, which would be seen by John and likely by his male friends, Margaret uses similar language to position herself as a muse, but subverts the construction to insert her own view of an ideal marital relationship. “To Mr. P” allows her to gently chide her husband for spending too much time in political pursuits, which she finds antithetical to poetic ones. In this poem, she describes herself as an “attentive muse” (l.1) who has “shar'd with thee th' sprightly hour” (l.4). She is impressed by the “wisdom and taste” of John's “polish'd lays” (ll.7-8) and calls him a “favor'd votry” (l.5) of the muses. As she adheres to conventional muse language, she gives herself some power by positioning John as a votary who worships her. She also depicts the two of them writing jointly, as she has “with thee each mortal theme survey'd” (l.3). Instead of simply giving him the inspiration to write, she actually writes with him, on the same subjects. In light of the gendered division of the poems in the Page book both in terms of subject matter and of physical placement, the suggestion that she and John might write together and address the same topics is subversive and potentially radical.

Margaret uses neoclassical conventions to take on the muse role assigned to her by the male poets, through which she can lightly criticize John's political career and thus empower her role as a wife and poet. Initially in this poem, Margaret appropriates male representations of herself as a muse, using language similar to that of John and the male poets to present her own idealized view of marriage. Later in the poem, though, she begins to recognize how her husband's real-life role as a politician will complicate this representation of marital and poetic unity. After describing this marital utopia between a muse and an admiring poet, she asks that John "let not politician's schemes, Detach thee from the muses train, / For sweeter far the poets dreams, / Than all ambition e'er did feign" (ll.9-12). Unlike the male poets who represent her in abstract, emblematic terms, Margaret interrupts her idealistic description to recognize that John has obligations outside of their relationship. She goes so far as to belittle "politician's schemes," even valuing poetry above his public work. Even though this poem is subversively centered on Margaret's needs in marriage, it is acceptable in print because of its whimsical neoclassical language, which mirrors the male poetry.

While Margaret subverts muse language in her printed poem, in manuscript additions she openly reverses it as she imagines muses attempting to do her domestic labor. In "To Miss JL" and "To Miss Smith D," she details the domestic labor required of her and the inequalities she sees between husbands and wives, which the marriage poems ignore. These two poems are addressed to different single friends and seem to warn them of their fate once married. She opens "To Miss JL" by directly addressing her friend, seeming to confirm questions about labor in marriage:

Indeed! dear friend, it is too True
A Country Wife has much to do;
No moment finds of peaceful leisure
To ope the Muses sacred Treasure
From Books and Poetry must turn
To mark the Labours of the Churn
Or worse than poor Arachne's doom,
Watch o'er the progress of the Loom
For When I would compose a Lay,
Come! Mistress come! The cotton weigh!
1-10

Her domestic duties leave her little time for reading and writing; whenever she begins a poem she is inevitably interrupted by one of her obligations as household manager. Throughout the poem, mundane details cause "The Death of Wit, and Sentiment" (l.14). In Parnassus, where the muses live, things are much different: "No Children's cries did e'er invade / Th' inspiring stillness of the Shade" (ll.25-26). While the men constructed her as an inspirational muse figure in their representations of her upcoming marriage, she has come to realize that "No Muse was ever yet a Wife, / For Muses, I have heard it said, / Tho' often wooed do never wed!" (l. 20-22). With an indignant tone, she explains that muses do not tend chickens, teach children, dress for dinner, or even need to produce such bothersome things as clothes and food. John and his male friends certainly failed to consider all these incongruities between the roles of real women and their representations of idealized muse figures in their poetry. In "To Mr. P," Margaret considered how John's labor would take him away from poetic pursuits, but she also ignored the labor that she would perform once she married him. As she releases her frustration at her lack of time

for writing, she expresses a sense of being trapped by her fate to “Drudge along thro' life” as a “domestic Wife” (ll.47-48).

In her other manuscript marriage poem, “To Miss Smith D, written in the name of Mr. F. Page,” she takes on a male perspective in order to ironically criticize a gendered economic system that devalued, yet depended upon, women's labor. Several other poems in the volume are written “in the name of,” such as “An Anacreontic on Beauty, By Col. B------d, addressed to Miss L------r, in the name of J.P.” In these poems, the author takes on a friend or acquaintance's persona to speak to someone else. Margaret speaks through the voice of “Mr. F. Page,” most likely a relative of John's, addressing a single woman to whom he is engaged. Speaking in a male voice, Margaret ironically invokes the language of equality that was prevalent during and after the revolution:

> Mischievous Smith whose sole employ
> Is still each day to forge a chain
> Wouldst thou fair Freedom's power destroy
> And o'er our Sex despotic reign?
>
> Know equal rights we here demand
> In mutual Services engage;
> Exchange thy Heart, and yield thy Hand,
> And Live in a recording Page
>
> 1-8

As noted above, women had changing ideas about their agency in marriage, as they began to decide independently whom they would marry or if they would marry. In this poem, Margaret alludes to latent notions of equality in the country's founding documents, suggesting that the system of marriage opposes these principles. John himself was a proponent of republican doctrine and supported equal rights, but of course these were

meant only for white men. Margaret reverses the gendered system of power, ironically positioning the man in the subordinated position as a "hen-pecked husband," demanding that his soon-to-be wife give him the rights he deserves.

Margaret's male speaker accuses a "Mischievous Smith" (l.1) of attempting to "forge a chain" (l.2), just as a blacksmith would. He questions, "Wouldst thou fair Freedom's power destroy / And o'er our Sex despotic reign?" (ll.3-4). Combining suggestions of equal gender rights with revolutionary language of freedom from tyranny, the male speaker is indignant that Miss Smith would abuse her power over him. Margaret makes this ironic point to illuminate the true inequality in her lived experience, in which women were subordinate to men, but unable to make such bold statements publicly.

After making this feminist statement about gender equality, she goes on to position marriage as an economic system of exchange between two people who provide services to one another. The male speaker tells Miss Smith, "know equal rights we here demand"(l.5), because men and women "in mutual Services engage" (l.6). The word "mutual" was often used to describe the ideal of egalitarian love in marriage (Norton 234), and John and his friends use it at length in their marriage poems. Here, it refers to economics, depicting marriage as a system of production that requires different, but equally valuable, kinds of labor. While Margaret perhaps wishes that she could demand "equal rights" based on the importance of her domestic labor described in "To Miss J L," in this poem she presents an ironic picture of a man who is indignant that his fiancé does

not value him as an equal, perhaps suggesting that women should be outraged at their subordinated situation.

As the poem ends, the male speaker attempts to regain some power by insisting that Miss Smith "Exchange thy heart, and yield thy hand / And Live in a recording Page" (ll.7-8). His request emphasizes the circumscription of women in a domestic realm: if she agrees to enter into marriage with him by literally selling herself, or "exchanging" her heart, she will be forever trapped on a "recording Page," like words in a book. Her former identity will disappear, like her name. Just as John seems confident in his ability to marry Margaret if he wants in "To Miss," here Margaret's male speaker almost commands Miss Smith to enter a marital union. With this change of tone, the male speaker reclaims power and Miss Smith loses some of hers, suggesting that Margaret saw a single state as more powerful for a woman than a married one. Margaret speaks in the dominating voice of a man, but uses her words ironically to illuminate women's own subordination. In this poem and in "To Miss J L," she adds her own perspective on marriage to a printed volume that idealized the institution and ignored her real-life experience entirely.

The post-Revolutionary period marked many changes in ideas about marriage and the family. Companionate marriages placed importance on mutual love, while the roles of Republican mother and wife gained social importance largely because of their value to the new system of government. But while these changes gave women's roles higher stature in theory, their lived experience was still very circumscribed. As wives and mothers, women performed domestic labor that enabled their husbands to have public

roles outside the home. And no matter how highly valued the role of Republican mother was, it still meant that women's labor in child rearing was necessary to the state, even though the government refused to allow them an official voice.

In its gendered division, the Page book illustrates the incongruities of the institution of marriage as it related to the maintenance of the new government. With their abstract, idealized representations of marriage, John and his friends use language associated with the companionate ideal, celebrating John's feelings for Margaret. But these ideas cloud their perception of Margaret's experience in this new role, allowing them to focus entirely on how she will provide John happiness and emotional support. In the printed poems, written prior to her marriage, Margaret has a limited idea of what marriage means and can only offer a subtle critique of male oversights. In the manuscript poems written after her marriage, she is able to directly critique the system of marriage as she has experienced it. She discusses her domestic duties at length, detailing how her lived experience departs in extreme ways from the men's idealistic representations and even categorizing marriage as an economic system in which services are exchanged. Although the companionate marriage was meant to be a building block for a unified citizenry, exchanges between this political leader and his wife show that it was still inherently male-centered and thus engendered division between men and women. While women were receiving more praise and recognition for their roles as Republican wives and mothers, they still did not have a voice in the government. Excluded from the political system and subordinated in marriage, Margaret developed her own social system that connected her to a female-centered network of fellow writers.

“When your inspir’d works I view”: Female Literary Networks in Margaret's Journal and Poems

Throughout much of her literary correspondence with female friends, Margaret discusses domestic labor, subtly mentioning it in print while directly critiquing it in manuscript. As she uses poetry to discuss and question her socially-prescribed role as a woman, she creates a new role for herself as a leader in a group of literary friends. In this all-female space, she can perform a different kind of labor, as a poet who produces work that supports friends and encourages their writing. In Margaret's view, as expressed in “To Miss Smith D,” marriage required an inherently unequal exchange of labor between husband and wife. Her alternative support system of women writers, created and maintained through literary correspondence, also depended on exchange. In these relationships, the currency is writing: sometimes offering comfort in times of trouble, sometimes fostering intellectual conversation between “polish'd mind[s].”[25]

There is not enough information in the Page book to recreate a cohesive narrative of Margaret's involvement in literary social groups and networks, although her work in the book shows that she was part of both heterosocial and homosocial literary groups. The few poems she directs to female friends suggest that writing poetry was *both* a way to establish alternative supportive relationships outside of marriage *and* a way to practice writing as a vocation. Neither of these aspects can be privileged over the other; they interact within her discussion of traditional female labor. Poetry becomes a rewarding

25 From “To Miss W-------, on New Year's Day”

form of intellectual labor that allows her to be a leader in a female-centered community, express discontent with her limited social role, and exchange support in sorrowful times.

Before discussing Margaret's use of female literary correspondence to establish an alternative social system of support, it is helpful to look at a poem she wrote for a heterosocial group which suggests the importance she assigned to writing. In "Written for the Dreaming Society, of which I was once a member, and of which Dr. TL was president," she parallels the position of "poet" with public male careers. She portrays poets as performing honorable labor, differing only in positive ways from that of greedy merchants and self-centered doctors. Margaret suggests that writing is a valuable form of labor and that poets should be considered as important in society as lawyers and judges.

She begins the poem by praising the Dreaming Society, who "taught me first to dream" (l.1), allowing her to discuss both "sprightly joys and deep-felt woe" (l.4). She goes on to describe the innocence of youth, when "bourne on fancy's wings we fly, / O'er all that can create a sigh" (ll.11-12). Suddenly, this youthful joy is interrupted by "dull realities" (l.22) and "sad experience" (l.23), and in adulthood the creativity of dreaming does not come so naturally.

She demonstrates how men in respected professions, whom she calls the "sons of dullness" (l.48), might attempt to dream. Merchants dream of profit, and do not "awake / 'Till money fails, and friends forsake" (ll.27-28). Lawyers join the "general vision" (l.30) by dreaming, and sometimes "dreams prevail" (l.31), even in the formal, sterile environment of the courtroom, where "judges are arrang'd around" and "appear profound" by wearing gowns and wigs. As she describes the courtroom, judges seem

inactive and powerless; they are merely mindless figureheads. She suggests that it is surprising that dreaming can occasionally occur in such a lifeless place. She goes on to explain with humor that doctors are also dreamers, because they seem to have so much power over the content of dreams. For Margaret, dreaming often involves writing about the joy of life and the sorrows of death, and doctors pronounce "with supreme decision, / That life and death are but a vision" (ll. 37-38).

After poking fun at all these male professions and suggesting that they have trouble becoming dreamers because of the corruption inherent in their work, Margaret praises poets as a group who are certainly different from the mainstream. The poet is constantly bombarded by dreams, which cause frequent emotional swings: "Now soaring light on wings of air, / Now whelm'd beneath the waves of care" (ll. 41-42). For the poet, there is no pretense or personal corruption: the ability to dream promotes both creativity and purity. The poet is destined "in extremes his life to flow" (l. 46), in contrast to those in more traditional and lucrative, yet boring positions: "While smoothly with the plodding throng, / The sons of dullness dream along" (ll. 47-48). Margaret suggests that the poet has a more meaningful and important role than lawyers, doctors, and merchants.

It is important to note that Margaret constructs the poet as male, just like the other public professions she describes. She probably made this decision because the poem was printed, and it would not be acceptable to parallel a female poet with the other male roles. Even when she uses a male poet her suggestion that this could be a profession is radical and might have been interpreted as humorous. As discussed earlier, writing was largely a social endeavor amongst small groups of friends at the time. Copyright laws had only

been established in 1790, and distribution networks were limited. In short, few authors were able to support themselves with their writing. Margaret suggests that the poet's creative labor is more valuable than the male professions because the poet is well-meaning and deeply in touch with the emotionality of lived experience, in contrast to the dull drones who go through the motions of their profession with only profit in mind.

As the Page book shows, Margaret was active as a poet and had appreciative audiences for her work. Male poets such as Tucker commented on her skill, while female friends received advice and encouragement through literary correspondence. Although the role of female poet would, in actuality, never be considered a real career like medicine or law, Margaret uses this poem to show that she believes in the importance of poetry writing, both as a personal endeavor and a socially important role. In her literary correspondence with female friends, she is able to take on the role of poet as an alternative to her expected domestic role. Through this role she leads female friends by encouraging them to write, suggesting that they question traditional roles, and supporting them in difficult times.

Margaret's printed journal, which opens the volume, is addressed to her friend Susan Murray and serves the dual purpose of providing a space for literary conversations and subtly critiquing the marriages of mutual friends. She chronicles an extended visit with friends in her native New York, which took place before her acquaintance with John. While the practice of including travel journals in commonplace books and

miscellanies did have precedent,[26] the presence of this particular journal in the Page volume is ironic. In a book that glorifies the Page marriage, Margaret's journal subtly suggests that her mixed views about marriage had been forming for some time. Margaret alludes to the fact that Susan has recently gotten engaged, and she expresses fear that their close friendship will suffer as a result. Throughout the journal, she records matter-of-fact observations about the marriages of mutual friends, sparing no details about problems in their relationships. Margaret is surrounded by married couples during her trip, but she makes it clear that she is most dedicated to her absent friend Susan, with whom she has a highly-valued literary relationship. While Margaret makes no direct connection between her suspicions about marriage and her literary relationship with Susan, her interweaving of the two subjects suggests that while still single, she saw marriage as a threat to female unity.

John probably chose to include the journal in the Page volume not only because of the quality of the writing, but also because of the quality of the friends Margaret describes in it. She stays with the Dongans, a prominent New York City family possibly descended from Thomas Dongan, Governor of New York in the early eighteenth century. After the book was printed, she noted that the journal was "Addressed to Miss Murray. The sister of Lindley Murray, Author Of the English Reader, Grammar."[27] The Murrays were also an established family in New York, prominent in shipping and overseas trade.

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26 For example, excerpts from Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's journal about a trip to England are included in Milcah Martha Moore's commonplace book.

27 Murray's first textbook was published in 1795. His English Grammar was extremely popular and remained a standard reading text for the first half of the eighteenth century (Downey xvi).

As he brought Margaret into both his social and literary circles, John might have thought it useful to demonstrate his new wife's social status.

Whether the journal was included simply for its literary merit, or for its social merit as well, it creates an unintended complication in the book as a whole. As I have shown, John's section is dedicated in large part to celebrating the Page marriage. Margaret's section of poems is mostly silent on the issue, but her journal subversively speaks to problems for women in marriage. Her connection with Susan is both an outlet for shared literary interests and a mode of establishing support, which Margaret clearly expects from Susan in the form of regular letters.

Margaret records a reaction to receiving a letter as a way to encourage Susan to continue writing:

> I seized thy letter, which contained *six* sheets, and it was there that I read, 'Absence and time, which destroy all things, but increase my affection, I seek for thee in every object, and death only can erase thee from my heart!' Ah! my beloved Susan! Yet I wish not to reproach thee—I know that *thou* art happy—and *self* was never with me an idol–be happy then my friend, oh! mayest thou be as happy as *I* with thee–and no obtruding thought shall for one moment make a pause in thy felicity
>
> 9

As she wishes for her friend's happiness, she emphasizes that Susan is replacing her with someone else: “mayest thou be happy as I with thee.” Throughout the journal, Margaret mourns a loss of closeness with Susan. Susan might have been getting married, and Margaret worried that their physical separation and the new differences in their social positions as married and single would change their relationship. She knew that she and Susan had more time for friendship when they did not have the responsibilities that came

with marriage. With mocking self-sacrifice, Margaret hopes for her friend's happiness while making clear that she still expects emotional support through frequent correspondence.

Margaret uses her narrative of daily interactions with friends to highlight women's dependence on their husbands. In her descriptions, Margaret positions herself as an outsider confiding in Susan, emphasizing to her both the importance of their close friendship and possible problems for women in marriage. The first married woman she encounters is "Mrs. R------to," who intimidates Margaret as "one of those women that we look up to, as a superior order of being!" (1). In her depiction of Mr. and Mrs. R's marriage, husband and wife are introduced separately and Mrs. R's individual personality is emphasized. Margaret is originally unwilling to start a conversation with this admired woman because of "*my own* inferiority," but Mrs. R approaches her, revealing "unaffected politeness and good nature" (1-2). After such high praise of Mrs. R, Margaret expresses only tentative approval of Mr. R, noting that "he appears devoted to her, and if we may judge by his countenance, is deserving of the happiness he enjoys" (2). She recognizes that in a marriage, a couple may appear content, but actually be unhappy. Alluding to the companionate ideal, she values happiness in a marital union, but seems wary of Mr. R as a worthy companion for the much-admired Mrs. R.

In a later introduction of "P and his wife," she gives the couple the unflattering collective description of "good kind of *vegetable* people, who exhibit no marks of existence but in the spot where they grow–and the young plants that spring up around them" (17-18). While she was suspicious of the happiness in Mr. and Mrs. R's marriage,

she views the marriage of “P and his wife” as incredibly boring, unable to even separate husband from wife in her description. She recognizes that marriage can be unhappy when she discusses Mr. and Mrs. R, and that it can be very dull in Mr. and Mrs. P's situation.

The marriage she describes in most depth is that of her hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Dongan. Although she introduces them as “Patience and D,” as they welcome her to their home, throughout most of the narrative she refers to them collectively as “Mr. and Mrs. D” and describes them doing activities together: riding in the phaeton (4), returning home for dinner (6), going to church (18). While she describes Patience engaging in few activities alone, Mr. D is often independent: he returns from a trip on horseback carrying no letters from Susan, much to Margaret's disappointment (7), participates in a group debate about novels (15), and suggests the party take a voyage, which “was proposed and instantly executed, for our friend D, admits of no delays” (23). As opposed to her active and powerful husband, Patience is mentioned by herself only once. She describes an evening spent in conversation with several female friends, calling Patience “*all* that a woman *ought* to be” (22). She subtly criticizes Patience for adhering to limited societal expectations of women, suggesting that she was unhappy with these restrictions.

In these descriptions of marriage, Margaret values the relationship of Mr. and Mrs. R the most, hoping for Mrs. R's happiness because she respects her. But none of the unions are ideal: Mr. R might not be a worthy companion, Mr. and Mrs. P are incredibly boring, and Patience is passive and vapid as she fulfills her expected female role. Margaret subversively criticizes problems with female satisfaction and independence in marriage, but also expresses hope that it can be mutually happy. As she gives Susan a

daily chronicle of problems in marriages of mutual friends, she also includes discussions of literature, copies of her own poems, and strong requests that Susan send letters. Her questioning of marriage emphasizes the importance of their friendship, long-established and currently based on exchanging writing to discuss literary themes and offer support.

Interspersed with criticisms of married friends is a discussion of popular novels, which allows Margaret to highlight the connection she and Susan have as literary women. She suggests that they stand out from other women who are not interested in intellectual pursuits as she describes her annoyance with Miss Depeyster, the only other single woman in the party, "an affable, agreeable girl, who pleases without interesting" (14). They spend an hour gossiping about the engagements of Miss Depeyster's brothers, one of whom Margaret finds "very handsome" (15). Then they are joined by Mr. Dongan and another male friend, the Parson, and begin discussing novels. While the Parson approves morally sound novels and Mr. Dongan "vehemently condemn[s] them" (15), she also notes with a tone of contempt that Miss Depeyster, who was so chatty earlier, "said little" (15). Margaret recounts for Susan her own strong reaction to the discussion, as she defends a novel by Henry MacKenzie: "'Man of Feeling' lay on the table—I raised it—blush ye 'righteous over much' said I, who condemn for religion's sake, for where will you find precepts that breath [sic] more of the spirit than of our divine Master!" (15). She praises only the morality of the book in the heterosocial gathering, but goes on to discuss its literary merit with Susan, saying that while Mackenzie discusses moral themes, he does so in a beautiful way: "Incomparable MacKenzie! It is thine to cloath *Virtue* in her loveliest garment" (15). Her discussion of MacKenzie makes her think of a play that she

and Susan both admire, *Edward and Eleanora*, by James Thompson. She asks, "You recollect, my dear friend, the beautiful reply of Selim to Edward," and goes on to quote the passage. In marked comparison to her discussion with Miss Depeyster, Dongan, and the Parson, with Susan she can be completely open about her literary opinions.

She goes on to declare that Thompson should be named "*the Poet Laureat of Nature*" (16), but quickly gives a disclaimer to her previous literary discussion: "but do you know I have renounced the whole region of romance—and have written an abjuration, declaring that no author, however admired, shall again seduce me" (16). In light of her previous defense of MacKenzie to her friends and her high praise of both authors to Susan, this statement is probably an ironic nod to societal suspicion about women reading novels. She quickly moves to recording a poem in praise of MacKenzie, showing that she certainly does not intend to give up reading any time soon. Her poem is interrupted by Miss Depeyster, who asks "whether I intended to devote myself entirely to you, or to attend to the claims of Mrs. D and herself" (17). Margaret begrudgingly leaves her journal, as "*Politeness* soon decided" (17) that she should join her hosts. Again, she emphasizes that her literary connection with Susan means much more to her than her relationships with other friends—and, by extension, perhaps suggests to Susan that their friendship should be more important than marriage. This passage provides a look into many facets of Margaret's literary life. She is comfortable discussing and even defending literature to a mixed social group and has little patience for a female acquaintance who does not love reading as much as she does. In contrast, she and Susan share a literary

body of knowledge that allows her to reference texts she knows her friend will understand and appreciate.

In addition to discussion of current literature, Margaret shares her own poems with Susan. She seems to have copied previously-written poems into her journal when her prose musings reminded her of her own poetic work. For instance, when she is interrupted by Miss Depeyster, she is in the midst of copying a poem she wrote about MacKenzie. With annoyance, she stops mid-stanza and later tells Susan, "I was running on, and should have given you the whole of it, without remembering, that there were but four lines applicable *here*" (18). Margaret must have written the poem earlier, and intended to include it in the journal because she was reminded of it by her discussion of MacKenzie. Unlike the self-consciously domestically-themed poems she addresses to female friends in the printed section of poems, here she uses her journal to collect and share previous work with her friend. Throughout the journal, Margaret seamlessly includes her own poetry to add poignancy to her prose narrative. She offers no explanation of her practice, so it is likely that she and Susan had established this mode of communication and used it previously. Margaret uses both prose and poetry in the journal to candidly share her thoughts with Susan about their mutual friends.

Whether she is discussing literature, offering her own poems, or questioning her friend's decision to marry, Margaret emphasizes the importance of her relationship with Susan. During the middle of her visit she receives "your dear letter," which informs her that Susan will be coming for a short visit: "on Wednesday—on Wednesday I shall see thee—Ah! I would annihilate time, and bring thee this moment to me!" (18). She

expresses her love for Susan with passion, emphasizing that their exchange of literature, conversation, and mutual support was important. Her journal shows that literary correspondence with friends was a source of emotional support for Margaret before her marriage, and that she feared losing this connection after it. As manuscript poems written after her marriage show, she probably sometimes wished she could return to this pre-marital state. Her manuscript poem "To Miss JL," discussed above, shows that her suspicions about marriage as expressed in the journal were quickly confirmed. Margaret finds that she must "drudge along thro' life" as a "domestic Wife," a position that leaves her very little time to engage in her alternative role as a writer. But the presence of this manuscript poem and others like it, written after her marriage, show that Margaret did occasionally find the time. She used her work to discuss the limitations of domestic labor in marriage while maintaining close connections with literary friends like Susan.

In addition to showing her literary relationship with Susan, the printed book reveals one other extended female correspondence with "Miss W," in which Margaret privileges her role as a poet who exchanges intellectual and emotional support through writing over her domestic female role. Since the three Miss W poems are printed, appearing throughout Margaret's section,[28] they were written before her marriage to John, when her domestic labor did not include the management of a large household. The titles all indicate that the poems were written on New Year's Day, also Margaret's birthday,

28 "To Miss W on New Year's Day, with a painted work basket, on one side of which was Hope, resting with one hand on her anchor, and with the other pointing to the future" appears third, "To Mrs. W, on my Birth-Day, the first of the New Year" appears fifteenth, and "To Miss W, on New Year's Day" appears nineteenth.

probably over the course of a few years. The three poems have similar subjects, addressing how friendship provides support through life's sorrows.

The first Miss W poem that appears in Margaret's section makes only a passing allusion to domestic labor, establishing intellectual thought and production as important alternatives. In the poem's title, Margaret indicates that her poem accompanies the gift of a decorated work basket, probably for Miss W's sewing and embroidery supplies: "To Miss W------ on New Year's Day, with a painted work basket, on one side of which was HOPE, resting with one hand on her anchor, and with the other pointing to the future." But in the poem, there is no mention of domestic labor; instead Margaret gives an extended explanation of the meaning she sees behind the female figure of Hope on the basket, perhaps to give Miss W something to think about as she sews:

> Ah! friend belov'd! behold another year,
> Smiles on our friendship made by time more dear,
> While *hope* points forward with extended view,
> To the bright prospect early fancy drew!
> Of friendship strength'ning with increasing years,
> Of pleasures shared, and of mingled tears;
> For such the wond'rous power on hope bestow'd,
> The sweet enliv'ner of our dreary road.
> She can of space and time the bounds defy,
> And to the heart its dearest joys supply.
> Even in the gloomy caverns of despair,
> She banishes the haggard form of care,
> To light and life, restores the sinking soul
> And holds o'er misery her mild controul.
> 27-40

The figure of Hope on the work basket reminds Miss W that she and Margret have shared pleasure and sorrow during their long friendship. As she points toward "the bright

prospect early fancy drew" (l.30), Hope reminds them of the innocence of their youth. Even though they have endured trials since then, Hope still has the power to "hold o'er misery her mild controul" (l.40). When Miss W looks at the picture on the work basket as she sews, she can remember the poem as a representation of the support she and Margaret share, which provides through poetry both an intellectual connection and a source of emotional support.

A similar poem, "To Miss W-------, on New Year's Day," further emphasizes Margaret's admiration of her friend's intellect. With a similar theme of looking to the future with the start of the new year, Margret hopes:

> Then may the choicest blessings on my friend,
> Unnumber'd still thro ev'ry year attend!
> Her life as radient as her polish'd mind,
> By sense enlight'ned, and by taste refined;
> Still harmoniz'd to pleasure, smoothly flow,
> Soft as her notes that bid our bosoms glow,
> When "wak'd to extasy the living lyre,"
> Sweet musick's rapturous powers our souls inspire!
> 11-18

Margaret praises Miss W's "notes that bid our bosoms glow" and "our souls inspire." With a plural pronoun, she shows that Miss W's writing bonds these two friends, and perhaps others, in common joy and inspiration. As she celebrates her friend's writing ability, she also offers emotional support.

No examples of Miss W's poetry exist in the book, but one response to a similar gift of a poem and work basket does remain, showing how one female literary correspondent valued Margaret's work. "To Miss ******* on receiving from her a

painted Work Bag, with the following Lines in a Medallion," is written by "A.G.P," possibly John's daughter from his first marriage, Alice Grymes Page.[29] The title is followed by a reproduction of Margaret's short poem:

> *Let Sympathy create the Tie,*
> *For kindred minds can space defy,*
> *And value to each pledge impart,*
> *That wakes the feelings of the heart.*
> 1-4

With this gift, Margaret includes a poem that must have been inscribed onto a medallion and attached to the bag. She expresses the importance of intellectual and literary connection between women, in spite of physical distance. Alice's response follows, in which she praises Margaret's poetic ability and expresses gratitude for the gift. Just as Margaret does not directly address labor in her poem to Miss W, Alice also ignores the labor the work bag implies, focusing instead on Margaret's poetic ability. She commends Margaret for establishing connections through poetry, telling her that she has shown the poem and gift to a number of friends, who have "viewed with wond'ring eyes, / The beauteous Work-bag which I prize" (ll.5-6). Her poetry "wakes the feelings of our hearts" (l.4) and "commands esteem and highest praise" (l.8). As she praises Margaret, she demeans her own intellect: "Though artless unadorned my mind, / 'Twill sympathize with yours I find" (ll.11-12). Even as she criticizes herself, she recognizes that their

29 Alice was named for John's mother, who died when he was a baby. She would have been fifteen when her father married Margaret.

poetic exchange is both intellectual and emotional, as "'kindred minds' may sympathize, / Though diff'ring vastly in their size" (ll.13-14).

In her exchanges with Miss W and Alice, Margaret claims a role as a writer beyond her domestic duty and establishes a system of emotional and intellectual support outside of marriage. By sending poems with the gift of a work basket, she cleverly masks her agenda of offering intellectual stimulation beyond mundane domestic roles by actually referencing these tasks directly in titles. Through these gifts, she merged intellectual and domestic labor, ultimately suggesting that friends value their intellectual and literary life as equal or even superior to their traditional labor.

In addition to subverting traditional women's roles by highlighting the importance of literary correspondence, Margret also had a role as an elegist in her female community. Caring for the sick and mourning were traditional female roles, as the George Washington poem suggests. Two very different printed elegies chosen for inclusion in the Page book suggest that part of Margaret's role as a poet was producing mourning poems to guide female friends through grief. Margaret also added a manuscript poem preparing a friend for the possibility of her own death, which speaks to the ever-present threat of illness and death, especially for women, in her society. Whether she is helping a friend mourn or preparing a friend for her own death, Margaret integrates her traditional female role as a caregiver and mourner with her alternative role as a poet, using writing to strengthen her literary and emotional ties with female friends.

"On the Death of Miss Alice Colden" allows Margaret to participate with her friend Susan in mourning for a friend who was probably near their age, ultimately

communicating with her through poetry to arrive at a sense of peace.[30] This poem contains seventy-one lines with no stanza breaks, giving it a frantic, rapid pace. It begins with the self-indulgent grief common to mourning poetry: “O'er Ella's tomb pour forth her hopeless moan, / While misery heaves the agonizing groan” (ll.5-6). When she tries to make a turn to acceptance and even rejoicing for Alice's peace in heaven, though, she is overcome by memories of her friend and is unable to accept her death: “Memory, wretched memory, loves to rove, / O'er the lost joys of friendship and of love” (ll.15-16). Her memories lead her back to sorrow, as “grief treads on grief, no hope of lost repose” (l.31). She mourns for Alice's parents and friends and laments that Alice died at the height of “youthful beauty's bloom” (l.51). Although she rationalizes Alice's early death with the idea that she was too pure for the mortal world, she still has trouble accepting her loss. Instead of simply being able to accept that Alice is happy in heaven, she must invoke her assistance, asking that she “bid thy gentle sister cease to mourn, / Her feeling breast with deep-felt anguish torn, / So shall thy numerous friends no longer grieve, / For thou art bless'd beyond what we conceive” (ll.67-71). In order to reach a conclusion and a sense of peace that Alice is at rest, she actually must address some of her lines to her departed friend, asking for her assistance with the mourning process. Ultimately she soothes Susan and herself not through clichéd promises that Alice is too pure for earth, but through the familiar practice of communicating through poetry. This poem of mutual

30 This poem is addressed to Miss M, and Alice Colden is referenced in the journal, suggesting that she wrote this poem for Susan Murray in mourning for their mutual friend.

mourning shows that supporting female friends was an important part of her role as a poet.

"To Lavinia" shows that she might have also served a wider social role as an elegist. While the frantic pace and personal material in the Alice Colden poem suggest that it was meant to help her mourn with Susan in a more private setting, "To Lavinia" is written about a friend's father, to whom Margaret seems to have had little personal attachment. This formal, refined poem seems more accepting of Lavinia's father's death, since "Age and disease his powers consum'd, / And urg'd him to a happier clime" (ll.37-38). With regular four line stanzas, this poem has an even tone, less willing to give into despair than the Alice Colden poem. The regularity and the comforting message are still meant to support her friend in grief, but she is more at peace with the death of her subject in this poem than in the last. Here, she is more able to communicate the same lesson about death that she struggled with in the Alice Colden poem. She asks that "The selfish wish, my friend, restrain, / His portion here, of *bliss*, how *small*? / How *large*, alas, *his* share of *Pain*?" It is possible that Margaret frequently wrote elegies for the family and acquaintances of female friends, offering comfort through her poetry.

While her printed elegies eventually accept the inevitability of death and loss, an added manuscript poem addressed to Maria Tucker allows Margaret to celebrate physical pleasure and material possessions while preparing Maria for the possibility of loss, perhaps even for Margaret's own untimely death. The privacy of manuscript allows her to express her enjoyment of life and suggest her fear of death. In "To Mrs. Maria T-----r with a Breast Pin, in form of a Crescent," Margaret offers a poem with the gift of a moon-

shaped piece of jewelry, representative of “Cynthia's mild endearing Light” (l.2), to give Maria a physical reminder of their friendship.[31] She hopes that the pin can “sooth thy every Care” (l.3), but decides this is a “Vain wish” (l.9), because everyone is destined to die and “seek a Refuge in the Sky” (l.12). Here she expresses a different attitude toward life, wishing for more time to enjoy it and expressing less hope for a peaceful afterlife. Despite ultimate death, friendship is like the moon goddess' “soft benignant light” (l.19), which can provide hope “When Pleasure's sunbeams disappear” (l.18). The soft, soothing power of female friendship is “Far more refreshing to the Mind / Than all that Splendor ever gave” (ll.21-22). In marked contrast to the brightness of the sun, the soft light of female friendship, represented by the moon, is both comforting to the spirit and refreshing to the mind.

At the end of the poem, she suggests that there may be a time when Maria experiences loss and is “in Absence doom'd to pine” (l.25). At this point, “Remembrance shall alone remain” (l.26). Like the Alice Colden poem, Margaret suggests that memories of friends can be sources of both comfort and sorrow. She tells Maria to honor the pin's representation of the comforting power of female friendship, asking her to “guard with care her sacred Shrine / Nor let her brightness know a Wane” (ll.27-28). The breast pin, then, becomes a shrine to female friendship and mutual memories, meant to sustain Maria through potential grief. In a way, it seems that Margaret could be preparing Maria for her own death, giving her a token of remembrance in case she dies an untimely

31 Cynthia was an alternative name for Artemis, the Greek goddess of childbirth, virginity, fertility, and the hunt, also identified with the moon goddess Selene.

death like Alice or Frances. For women, death in childbirth was a constant threat. Margaret makes a connection with Maria in order to celebrate life and prepare for death.

As a kind of preemptive mourning poem, this piece is less concerned with justifying death than the printed elegies. Instead, Margaret expresses the importance of female friendship for support throughout the trials of life. “To Lavinia,” “On the Death of Miss Alice Colden,” and “To Mrs. Maria Tucker” all address a female experience of mourning, attempting to support currently or potentially grieving friends and cope with the frequent experience of loss. These poems show that Margaret's role as an elegist helped her bring friends together in grief.

As Margaret journals to a friend about the downfalls of marriage, subverts the dominance of domestic work for women, and offers support for fellow mourners, she establishes a role for herself as a poet in a community of women. Although they must all engage in domestic labor, writing offers her a way to give and receive intellectual and emotional support. While she could never have an official vocation like the lawyers and doctors of her “Dreaming Society” poem, Margaret could carve out a space to perform intellectual labor. After her marriage, she continued to realize the importance of supportive networks of female friends. “To Miss JL” and “To Miss Smith D” offer explicit warnings about the labor and circumscription of marriage. “To Mrs. Maria Tucker” might have even been a result of her own fear that the domestic labor of childbirth would cause her to die young. Writing gave her the chance to discuss problems inherent in the male-centered system on marriage, while establishing an alternative role for herself and literary female friends.

Conclusions

When I began this project, I took a trip to Rosewell, the Page mansion in Gloucester, Virginia. It is little more than a red brick shell now, down back roads and dirt roads, with a small, modern building a few yards away that houses artifacts from Rosewell's excavation. When I told the docent I was doing a project on John Page's wife, she began to rattle off facts about Frances, until I explained that my research was on John's second wife, Margaret, who wrote poetry. Margaret seems to have survived in Page family history only as the *second wife*, whose death resulted in the sale of Rosewell to strangers.[32]

Imagining these walls whole, constituting the most magnificent Tidewater colonial mansion, is as difficult as reconstructing Margaret's story from her few surviving poems and letters. The weeds that fill the space inside the walls must have once been covered with wood flooring, carved staircases, and rich furniture. Which upstairs window was hers? Did she gaze at the creek below as she secretly penned poems in her book? I don't think Margaret would mind the current state of the mansion, site of so many hours of grueling labor: she promptly moved to Williamsburg after John's death in

32 Margaret's exact date of death is unknown, but in histories of the Page estate it is tied up with the sale of Rosewell in 1837 or 1838. The Rosewell Foundation states that Margaret inherited the house, lands, and slaves from John when he died—a very unusual turn of events considering that it was customary for the eldest son to inherit the estate, and there were plenty of eligible adult male heirs among John's twelve surviving children. Waterman's history of colonial mansions states that "Rosewell was passed from the Page family in 1838 on the death of the widow of Governor Page" (111), while the Rosewell Foundation notes that Thomas Booth purchased Rosewell from John's executors in 1837. Both sources imply that Margaret inherited the estate.

1807, and, as Page history is quick to reveal, she seems not to have made plans for the preservation of the estate upon her death.

I do wonder what she would think about the current state of her book: carefully preserved and housed safely in a special collections library. Would she be embarrassed? Or perhaps secretly pleased that future generations assigned some value to her work? Would she want many people to be able to read it, beyond the few who can access the original volume? I often return to her own words when I consider this question. In her journal, she records a conversation with Mr. Dongan, in which he questions her enthusiasm for visiting an old house in New York that holds happy memories.

> 'I am astonished said D------, what you can find in that dismal place the Parsonage to attach you to it' look into the volume of the past, replied I, for *you* are well acquainted with the days of happiness I *once* enjoyed there!—And surely, my friend, there is a pensive pleasure in the contemplation even of inanimate objects, when they recall to mind a beloved friend, or an interesting conversation.
>
> 9

Margaret reminds Dongan of the importance of examining "the volume of the past." I only hope that I have reconstructed her life and memories—her "interesting conversations" with "beloved friends"—in an honest way. Margaret's early feminist voice illuminates the intricacies of life for an elite woman in the early Republic, reminding us of the complexity of women's roles as she shows that "tho' for the Rose we oft meet with a Bramble." Her willingness to expose the brambles in her lived experience through poetry reveals one way in which an elite woman could express her discontent and engage in a project counter to her powerful political husband. John might

have been involved in “form[ing] a new World,” but Margaret could also “new systems create” by establishing a female-centered alternative that addressed her needs.

While male-centered systems of marriage and politics interacted to limit her voice and circumscribe her to the role of “domestic Wife,” Margaret used her poetry as a way to become a leader amongst literary friends. The book probably represents only a small part of the work she produced throughout her life, and the decision to print it most likely contributed to its survival. Although Margaret was a part of John's circle of writers, her literary practices with women seem more important because of the social support they allowed her to give and receive. The Page book represents a navigation of public and private, male and female, authorship and friendship. As it blurs these boundaries, it suggests new ways to understand early American literature: by assigning more value to belles lettres, searching for more early feminist voices like Margaret's, and continuing to investigate women's contributions to this literature. As Margaret suggests, we must continue to look into the volume of the past.

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Appendix A: Margaret Lowther Page's Journal and Poems

Margaret's work is transcribed in the order it appears in the Page book. Handwritten poems added between sections are identified with "manuscript" in brackets. Margaret's editing marks to printed poems are noted in brackets and blank brackets represent places where pages are torn. The original pagination of the journal has been retained for reference.

[untitled manuscript poem]

Has promiss'd to please you to take a short Canter,
And tho' for the Rose we oft meet with a Bramble,
How sweet in the Regions of Fancy to Ramble.
With the engaging, to take a short flight,
Variety, Virtue, and Love to unite.
To form a new World, new systems create.
And reign as despotic as tyranic Fate!
All hail! active power! sweet Fancy all hail!
Tis thine o'er each obstacle still to prevail.
In the bosom of Memory the Past to renew,
And bring All the future at once to our view!
And since, as so feelingly said,
(Ah, would, my dear friend, that like his were my head)
"That ne'er is delusive which tends to increase
The Store of our joys or adds to our peace"!
Still let us, my friend, the Idea pursue
Nor bid this dear Source of Enjoyment Adieu;
For Life is at best but a sad murmuring Stream,
And Him as the happiest, and wisest I deem,
Who enjoys every Blessing that to him is given,
And bows to Affliction as sent by high Heaven!

M.L.

Written on the President Washington's Birth Day February 22nd 1795 [manuscript]

[ ]ne held the Volume of the Past

(Miss Lowther's now)
~~Mr. &~~ Mrs. Page's & Mr. Tucker's
poems (now Judge Tucker)

Mr. & Mrs. Page's & Mr. Tucker's Poems

And o'er <u>each</u> Page his santion cast,
In magic Notes proclaim'd the Name,
Long hallowed at the Font of Fame:
When lo! array'd in Robes of Light
<u>Truth</u> shone refulgent to the sight,
Thrice waved her wand, new radiance shed
And Virtue's sacred Influence spread!
While thus she sung a Seraph's lay,
In heavenly Record of <u>this Day.</u>
Hail mighty Time! whose empire vast
Was, Is, and shall thro' Ages last,
Whose great and comprehensive end,
The powers of human thought transcend,
<u>All Nature</u> kneeling at thy Shrine
Proclaim thy origin divine
And tho' the dark and mystic veil
O'er Penetration must prevail;
Yet, to Fancy's eye 'tis given
To glance at once “from Earth to Heaven”
And thro' thy various Page to scan
The wond'rous History of Man,
And see She with new ardour burns
As to the <u>present Day</u> she turns,
For <u>I</u> well pleased each look illume
And dissipate the envious gloom
By <u>Faction</u> rais'd, abhorred Fiend!
In vain the Shade has intervened,
The fleeting mist has pass'd away

And but more brilliant made This Day!
Hail Thou! The Universal friend!
Still shall success thy cares attend,
And tho' thy Virtues Heaven sublime
Thou'lt live [illegible] still with Time!
Beloved by Age, revered by Youth,
Thy Fame immutable a Truth!
M.L.P

Sonnet to Melancholy [manuscript]

Thee Melancholy, thee I hail from cloister'd call,
Or lonely Church yard, where thou lov'st to dwell
Pale musing o'er the Corpse of injured worth;
Or patient Merit, hark! the hollow Earth
Resounds thy Footsteps, as you cautious tread
The silent, solemn Mansions of the Dead!
While from your Tomb an awful voice proceeds
For us a Saviour Died, a Saviour pleads!
Rejoice ye weary Pilgrims of the Earth!
[Wrath?] is to Virtue but a second Birth!
M.L.P

A JOURNAL

[Addressed to Miss Murray.
The sister of Lindley Murray, Author
Of the English Reader, Grammar]

Dongan Place, Saturday Night

The Pilgrims of the earth, whether they travel by land or by water, are equally liable to be tossed by tempests, or deceived by calms! The latter was our case—and three lingering hours did we waste on board the boat—Yet to a contemplative mind, each scene of life, however common, still presents with variagated hue, some object to awake the attention and excite reflection.—The elegant Mrs. R-----(to) was among the number of our

passengers—She is one of those women that we look up to, as a superior order of being! I felt *my own* inferiority, and viewed her only with the timid glance of admiration, 'till invited by the winning accent of courteous affability, to a converse which displayed at once unaffected polite-

(2)
ness and good nature! Her husband, who accompanied her, is an easy well bred man, appears devoted to her, and if we may judge by his countenance, is deserving of the happiness he enjoys.

On the wharf at Deckers, we were met by Dr. M--------, I never saw a man more altered! he is quite a parson, and accosted me with a solemnity of voice that chill'd me—he has not yet taken orders, but, I am told expects admission in a few weeks, as he has already applied to the Bishop. Unhappy son of necessity! May the blessed example of *him*, whose precepts thou art about to teach, diffuse itself over thy sentiments and conduct, and create in thee those principles without which alas! thou shalt labour in the vineyard in vain!

We proceeded to Mr. R-------(r?)'s mansion, which has been built since I was last here—It is an *attempt* at elegance, and promises something *more* than we meet with in the inhabitants, tho' they are very friendly and hospitable. My worthy friend, Mr. R-------d, think-

(3)
ing the weather too unfavorable for me to go to night to the parsonage, which is seven miles distant, proposed leaving me at Dongan Place—and I was received by Patience and D------- with all the warmth which our long intimacy demands. After two hours interesting conversation, in which we failed not to dwell on the *extravagant* scenes of *early* youth, I retired to the well known little chamber, where busy memory, drawing a veil from the past, presented a succession of reflections, which dissipated every thought of sleep, and involved me in a reverie, too destructive to happiness to be long indulged; I started from my chair—and recollecting my intention of writing a journal, immediately commenced it. Thus dismissing one train of thought by the introduction of another. I have raised my window to view the beauties of The night, which has cleared up delightfully,

The blue expanse, serenely clear,
No low'ring cloud doth now obscure,
But round a thousand worlds appear,
Which shall to latest time endure.

(4)
“Thou great first cause”, who form'd the plan,
Who gave to all to know their course;
From Heaven's high arch to feeble man,
Sustain'd by thy exhaultless source.

Ah! let thy influence impart,
To lead me thro' life's rugged road,
Meek *Piety* who lures the heart
To its last peaceful drear abode!

So shall my days, tho' marked with woe,
Tho' early taught alas to feel,
Without a murmur smoothly flow,
Resign'd to thy all-gracious will.

It was [o]in such a night as this, the last time I was here, that I remarked to Augustus and H----df----d, how little we enjoy'd these scenes in the city, “It is,” said H-------, “because *Art* is *there* the Empress, who is so lavish of outward ornament, that after long residence, our tastes become vitiated, and we turn with disgust from the simple though elegant charms of nature!”

PARSONAGE, *Sunday Night*

WE left Dongan Place early, as we intended going to church, Mr. and Mrs. D------ - in the phaeton, M-------- and myself on horseback;—

(5)
The delightful and variegated prospect our ride afforded, cast an awful and pensive shade over my heart; on one side the wide extended ocean, which seems to annihilate all ideas of space, presented a boundless view before us—On the other, the picturesque, beautiful appearance of the country, formed scenery truly romantic and diversified! There is something in the sublime appearance of the sea, that gives me a better idea of eternity than any other object I ever beheld—It seems to expand my comprehension, and I feel more conscious of future immortality, when the soul, no longer incumbered with its earthly garment, shall rove through the boundless realms of ever-during felicity. With sentiments like these, glowing with adoration of the great Architect of Nature, we entered

the temple, where divine service was already commenced, and joined in it with a fervour to which our ride had not a little contributed.—After prayers, we had an excellent illustration of Solomon's decision in favor of religion, “Her ways, are ways of pleasantness, and *all* her

(6)
paths are paths of peace,”—the sermons of Mr. R------ like those of Mr. M-----, particularly Address the heart; and are so simply eloquent, That they awaken all our native tender feelings, and excite the genuine sentiments of piety and truth.

Blessed Jesus! While others present their burnt sacrifices, thou despisest not the lowly offering of a meek and contrite heart, which uncovering itself before thee, only implores, in the words of the humble publican, “that thou wouldst be merciful unto a sinner!”

Mr. and Mrs. D-------, and Dr. M------ returned to the Parsonage with us and dined, but the lowring appearance of the weather induced them to leave us early—after their departure I perused two sermons, walked in the garden, And conversed with Mr. R------ till nine—and *now* my dear friend, I think it is time to wish thee peaceful slumbers, as I feel the effects of a long ride and a trotting horse.

(7)

I RESTED in the door of our cot—a still serenity reigned over nature—the departing rays of the sun, glimmered on the *top* of the mountain, as the moon rising in mild splendor ~~gilded~~ [silvered] its southern *side*!—These are the scenes of reflection—a certain awakened tenderness trembled around my heart—I thought of my Susan—of the days we numbered, when we enjoyed sweet counsel together, walking in the paths of affection as friends! The hand on which I leaned was wet, alas! said I, what shall withstand the test of *time*, when a friendship, virtuous and tender as ours, has fallen as the wheat before the scythe of the reaper? My friend! My friend! “Why hast thou forsaken me?” I recall'd that period, when from this very door, I looked with the eager eye of expectation, for thy approach—the trampling of a horse was heard—I flew to embrace thee—it was D------ the messenger of disappointment—the tears glistened on my cheek—His heart was then warm in the interests of mine! 'Weep not,' said he, 'for tho' my ef-

(8)
forts have been unsuccessful, they have not been the less ardently exerted, and behold,' continued he, presenting thy packet, 'behold I have brought thee consolation, in the language of the tenderest of friends!” I seized thy letter, which contained *six* sheets, and it

was *there* that I read, 'Absence and time, which destroy all things, but increase my affection, I seek for thee in every object, and death only can erase thee from my heart!' Ah! my beloved Susan! Yet I wish not to reproach thee—I know that *thou* art happy—and *self* was never with me an idol—be happy then my friend, oh mayest thou be as happy as *I* with thee—and no obtruding thought shall for one moment make a pause in thy felicity.

This place is very dear to me, I view it as the *monument* of many friends whom I saw here for "*the last time*!"—"*the last time*!" There ~~is~~ [are] but two expressions which touch me more sensibly than this—"I have seen better days" spoke with that tremulous sensibility

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of voice, which is peculiar to sorrow, strikes more forcibly on my heart than a studied detail of misfortunes; and "No more!" reminds us at once of *past enjoyments and present privation*!

"I am astonished said D------, what you can find in that dismal place the Parsonage to attach you to it" look into the volume of the past, replied I, for *you* are well acquainted with the days of happiness I *once* enjoyed there—And surely my friend, there is a pensive pleasure in the contemplation even of inanimate objects, when they recall to mind a beloved friend, or an interesting conversation—I rememb~~u~~r [e] the last time I made a visit to *thy retreat*—I traced the path in which we had so often rambled together, along the winding brook; and seating myself at the foot of our favorite tree, whose spreading branches, rich in green foliage, shaded me from the piercing rays of the sun—a flood of tenderness rushed on my heart, and having my pocket book about me, I could not forbear addressing this dear witness of former pleasures, in the following lines—

(10)

Dear tree! upon whose yielding rind,
My name in happy days was twin'd
With that lov'd friend's, whose smile disarm'd
Each anxious care that life alarm'd!
Dear tree! for whose sweet cooling shade,
We oft', when love and friendship sway'd,
The gayer scenes of bliss forsook,
And strayed along the winding brook.
Dear monument, of joys no more,
For now the lov'd delusion's o'er;
Deserted tree! a long farewell!

Ah! may no cruel axe e'er fell
Thy stately honors to the ground;
But still with leaves thy boughs be crown'd!
Not transient as the fading ties,
This hour man boasts, the *next* denies;
But lasting as the bliss that flows
From virtue's pure unsullied stream;
Which ne'er a diminution knows,
Its basis and its source supreme!

Tuesday Morn.
THE tear of filial duty has bedewed my cheek—The Parson, in compliance with a sudden resolve, departed to town, while I was yet under the influence of sleep!—he is gone—and has gone without one line from me, expressive of that tenderness and gratitude which animate

(11)
my bosom towards thee, thou dearest, best of parents—that I should in the smallest trifle, appear one moment neglectful in they eyes, to whom I owe all that renders life of value, covers me with sorrow and confusion; but thou knowest me *too* well, amiable parent! To impute [^it] to ~~it~~ "depravity of will," thy tenderness will be alarmed, thou wilt suppose me sick—incapable—any thing but negligent.

Ah! I see thee now with anxious solicitude enquiring the cause of my not writing—the Parson informs thee—a doubt arises—papa looks grave! Rachel is disappointed—the servants assemble—"No letters from Peggy!"---------Gracious God! Let the wreaths of admiration encircle the brows of the fair, and the splendors of fortune cast a light before the dwelling[s] of the rich! Happy in the love and approbation of my family, in the shade of mediocrity, and the humble exercise of domestic virtues; I implore no addition, but the blessed restoration of my wandering sister, that she may rest from her sorrows, and repose her weary head on the sympathetic

(12)
bosom of affection; for early, and deep, has she drank from the dark stream of affliction, when no consoling friend was near, or pitying hand to uphold her; but *thou* oh God! *thou* who "temperest the wind to the shorn lamb" and bindest up the wounds of the disconsolate and broken heart.[+]

DONGAN PLACE- *Wednesday Night.*

AS I look'd from the door of the Parsonage I beheld two chairs enter the lane—"it is *my Beulah* and Ogden, said I, and Dongan and Patience!" My heart rejoiced, it leaped to embrace thee, but soon was it depressed by the cold chills of disappointment! For tho it was Dongan and Patience; when I looked to welcome Ogden and thee, "behold it was not Rachel but Leah," It was Parson Bloomer and Miss Depeyster! They insisted on my returning with them and I am now here my friend, happy in the idea of seeing thee to-morrow, for we have formed the delightful plan of visiting Elizabeth—

+Mrs. McClain, an officer's wife—soon after her marriage, they started to Scotland, and he was killed on the ship. [marginal note in pencil, not in Margaret's hand]

(13)

Elizabeth sweet ville! to mem'ry dear,
Which shall to latest age, its name revere.

Four years have passed away as a fleet cloud, since in the amiable circle of Elizabeth. I lost the remembrance of sorrow, and lived only to pleasure—Ah with what emotion shall I review it.—how many recollections crowd on my mind—It was *there* that long absent health, returning, gave new vigour to the springs of life, and reanimating the long forgotten ardour of the soul, the world again appeared in all the alluring charms of youthful hope!—That a heart so tremblingly awake as mine, was not formed for the "jostlings of the world" though knowest my friend, but its *severest* trial has *never* been known to thee~~— for~~, sustained by conscious rectitude, and approving virtue, I have looked *up* to Heaven, and ~~looked~~ *down* on the world!+

Deeply taught in sorrows school,
I have learnt her iron rule,
Yet no murmurs from me broke—
Submissive to her ev'ry stroke,
To heaven alone I rais'd my eyes,
Nor aught desir'd beneath the skies.

+I suppose she alluded to the untimely death of the man she was to have married, before her acquaintence with my Grand[illegible]

(14)
Thursday Night
THE arrows of disappointment have again pierced my heart—This morning we assembled early at the breakfast table—the parson was missing! he was summoned; but alas! the fell hand of disease was upon him—and the sweet vision of yesterday fled as the dream of the mourning, for I am not to see thee my friend, till thou compliest with the request in my letter of to day for I have written to thee, and expressed our wishes for thy presence—come then thou who delightest to bestow happiness; come and restore her to that bosom of which thou hat so long been the arbitress.

Friday Night

Miss ~~Depeyster~~ is an affable, agreeable girl, who pleases without interesting; she flatters me she has long wished my acquaintance, and that she is desirous of cultivating it, and I have promissed her when I next visit Long-Island to remember she dwells at Jamaica. We have conversed an hour of the sweet Coldens, she is very

(15)
partial to Elcy—but contradicts the report of her brothers attachment to Polly.—How blind is affection! She assures me he is a young man of the *first* understanding, and every way accomplished! her brother James too she speaks of with enthusiasm, relating many instances of his virtue and courage—*he* must be, I think, an interesting character—she wears his picture, it is very handsome; pray did you ever see him? He is now at Newfoundland.

We passed an hour in the library this morning—the conversation turned upon novels—D-----n always ardent, vehemently condemned them—Miss D----- said little, the Parson approved, if they were well chosen—the "Man of Feeling" lay on the table—I raised it—blush ye righteous over much" said I, who condemn for religion's sake, for where will you find precepts that breath more of the spirit than of our divine Master!

Incomparable McKenzie! It is thine to cloath *Virtue* in her loveliest garment, adorned with all the amiable sympathies of a tender heart! *Such* as we *sometimes* find her, residing in the

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bosoms of "the chosen few" *not* such as the austere moralist pourtrays her, in the gloomy reveries of the closet, when he would teach us that a total abstraction from humanity is

the leading path to perfection.—You recollect, my dear friend, the beautiful reply of Selim to Edward (in Thompson's Edward and Eleanora)

"I am too much a man,
And feel *myself*, too much, the charming force
of human passions,
E'er with supercilious brow, or proud *affected*
virtue,
To condemn them."

There is a strain of tender sentiment, flowing through the whole of this play, which makes it more interesting to me than any play I ever read: Indeed our favorite Thompson may, with justice, be appelled the *Poet Laureat of Nature*! but do you know I have renounced the whole region of romance—and have written an abjuration, declaring that no author, however admired, shall again seduce me, even

Tho' lov'd McKenzie shou'd attention claim,
In the sad record of a tragic flame,

(17)

Lost of Julia's woes call forth this starting tear,
Or Harly borne on an untimely bier!
Oh Harly thou whose feeling bosom knew
To share each sorrow that from feeling grew.

I was running on, and should have given you the whole of it, without remembering, that there were but four lines applicable *here*, if a question from Miss D---------- had not caused a pause, which brought me to this recollection—this question was, whether I intended to devote myself *entirely* to *you*, or to attend to the claims of Mrs. D------ and herself? *Politeness* soon decided—so, adieu mon amie[,] por ce soir! Ah que je souhaite pour vous embrasser!

Saturday Night.

WE have just returned from --------'s old ruin, which is so *renewed*, that it has almost lost its former Gothick appearance—We were *admirably* entertained—"a word to

the wise is enough" (P)------ and his wife are good kind of *vegetable* people, who exhibit no marks of existence but in the spot where they grow—and the young plants

(18)
that spring up around them. Ah! how I hate your O,O,O,O's!

The Parson left us yesterday—I wrote by him to our friend Susan U-------, as he sermonizes at Flushing to morrow—how erroneous, are often the opinions we form on a superficial acquaintance; he is a sensible, conversable, amiable man, as opposite of the idea we had of him, as Martin W------ to the P------'s! Your dear letter was delivered to me this morning—I have answered it, and am now going to R-------'s that the tribute of my affection may greet thee as soon as possible—on Wednesday—on Wednesday I shall see thee—Ah! I would annihilate time, and bring thee this moment to me!

PARSONAGE, *Sunday*

Mr and Mrs. D-------, young M----, and the fascinating R-------y, accompanied me to church this morning. We went in R-------'s waggon which to me was not disagreeable, but
(19)
D----- complained horribly, wishing a thousand times for his phaeton, which is gone to town to be new painted—Miss Depeyster too, I suppose, did not approve of it, as she preferred staying at home : Indeed she was a loser. We had an excellent discourse, adapted to the season of the year, "The harvest is the end of the world"—For it is now that the work-worn children of industry revel in the lap of abundance—and reap the reward of their toils!

'Tis thine, oh labour! to bestow,
Delights the wealthy never know;
On thee, thy sister health attends,
For health and thee were ever friends,
Thy glowing cheek, thy sparkling eye,
Proclaiming loud the tender tye;
While on thy vig'rous steps await;
(With future prospects still elate)
Sweet smiling hope, who often chears,
And dissipates the labourers fears,
With distant good his bosom fills.

Painting the harvest while he tills:
For, when first, by angry Heaven,
Frail man from Paradise was driven,
The flaming Seraph, hope bestow'd,
To lure him thro' life's gloomy road,
His cares to lessen, toils sustain
And lighten half his load of pain!

(20)

For see, of ev'ry joy bereft,
None e'er so wretched yet was left
But that sweet hope would still appear
And check awhile the rising tear,
Some untried prospect bring to view,
Each faded pleasure to renew;
Or comfort should each earthly comfort fail,
Even o'er the grave and death prevail;
Presenting when this world is past,
Blessings that shall forever last.

Then smile, ye sons of labour smile,
Success at length shall crown your toil;
Fulfilling thus the eternal doom *
Dispell'd shall be each anxious gloom.
And you enjoy a sweet repose
When life is hast'ning to a close;
Of peace and competence possest,
And calm content that lulls to rest,
For labour still can these insure,
From anguish and remorse secure!
Then may your lowly joys be mine,
Far distant from ambition's shrine,
(Where soon the glit'ring phantoms fade)
A useful life, by virtue sway'd.

**3d. chapter of Genesis*

(21)
Monday

I HAVE passed this afternoon in the field, among the reapers, and as I helped to gather the sheafs that fell from the scythe, I could not forbear recalling the exclamation of Rosseau on a similar occasion, “Dignity thou daughter of Pride and mother of care, when did thy gloomy slaves enjoy a pleasure like this?” But Rosseau was a visionary, and the men of the world smile and despise, yet, my friend, if these are delusions, they are innocent ones, and contribute to happiness—and if the *head* has nothing to do with them, they are certainly in the sphere of the *hearts* attraction, and I am never so conscious of the better feelings as when under their influence!

[Wednesday] ~~*Tuesday*~~ *Night*

SORROW in the melting form of a tear, visited my eyes as I saw thee depart. Alas! said I, is there no happiness without alloy, and is

(22)
pleasure ever thus to be followed by quick succeeding pain! I have seen and embraced thee my friend, I have been made happy two days by thy presence; and yet I regret that it *was* so, since it *is* so no longer, for to *be* completely miserable it is necessary to *have* been happy—The children of long tried affliction, who have *ever* walked in the vale of sorrow, are not the most wretched, but they, who, pursued by the pensive shade of departed felicity, are constantly reminded of what they have lost, having at *once* the past and present to combat with!

Ah! why did memory Heaven bestow,
Of happiness the constant foe;
The source of many a fruitless tear,
Of anguish keen, and causeless fear.

Mrs. Livingston, who arrived as you departed, is a lively agreeable woman, whose open countenance invites friendship, and pleasing manners insure approbation—Wing'd by her conversation, and out amiable Patience's, who is *all* that a woman *ought* to be, the evening has glided more swiftly than I expected, for indeed

(23)
next to thee my friend, she is seated in my heart, and possesses my tenderest affection.

The Ocean, *Thursday*.

BEHOLD, on the treacherous surface of the wide extended ocean, thy wandering friend is now failing! Ah! how true an emblem of the world, for as our little barque glideth along, the next succeeding wave effaceth its furrow, and there remaineth no trace—So the pilgrim man walketh his destined round; in the sunshine of prosperity, is gazed at and admired, but descending to the vale of adversity, I remembered no more! It is two days since we left Dongan-Place—on Wednesday morning the party was proposed and instantly executed, for our friend D-------, admits of no delays—embarked then on board the little sloop Mary-Ann, we proceeded to the Hook, where we arrived in the evening, and being landed on the beach, the remembrance of the mournful fate of the unfortunate *Halluburton*, pressed hard on our

(24)
hearts—and we determined to pay the tribute of a sympathetic tear, on the sad monument which records his early sufferings! Upon enquiry we were informed it was three miles distant, but this did not deter us, though we had to walk through the sand, into which our feet sunk every step, several inches—At length overcome with fatigue, and almost fainting, we descried its white pyramidical form, in an opening, a few, yards from the beach, between two hillocks, which almost conceal it—and never did poor mariner, long tost by adverse seas, survey with greater joy the welcome shore—But soon, alas! my friend, was the transient pleasure excited by the attainment of a wished for object, changed to the tenderest sympathy and sorrow, when we read that this sad memento of human misery, was raised by the trembling hand of maternal affection. Ah my Beulah! what must have been this wretched parents feelings on receiving the agonizing intelligence! I wept as imagination presented *her* pensive form to my view, and *those* of the mourners of the

(25)
unhappy *twelve* who shared his fate, and who lye buried here in one common tomb.

As they one death, so they one tomb have shar'd!
Vain man's distinctions perish in the grave,
And he who many a noble title heir'd,
Now rests together with the humble slave!

The monument is plain and elegant, of white marble, and has the quartered arms of the noble family of Morton in the front, just above the inscription which contains a short narrative of the sufferings of the unfortunate *Halliburton* and his companions—and

a particular account of his family, and its being raised by his mother! Ah! feelingly has Young said, “When such friends part—'tis the survivor dies.”

I walked around it, and finding that on the back, several people have marked their names, I traced with an agitated hand the following effusions of the moment—the tribute of a heart, whose every fibre trembles to the sound of woe!

Lamented youth! to thy sad mournful fate,
Each sympathetic breast a [sigh] bestows;
[And] while we praise thy virtues, courage great,
We weep thy parents agonizing woes!

(26)
Last of a noble line, ah! what avail'd,
That wealth and honor's on thy name attend,
Hoar winter's freezing power o'er these prevailed
And bade thee to an early tomb descend!

Oh! much regretted, and untimely lost,
Take from a strangers hand this tribute lay,
Tho distant far from thy dear native coast,
Full many a friend to this lone spot shall stray!

And while each breast with sympathy shall glow,
An useful lesson shall thy fate impart;
Ye rich and gay! Ye young presumptive know,
How bright his hopes, and with a tear depart!

Ye guardian spirits! who protect the brave,
Since early thus you bade him life resign,
Oh here, your vigils keep, around his grave,
And with his memory, his worth enshrine!

Margaret L-------r

Margaret's printed section of poems begins here.

The following ~~elegant~~ lines written by ~~Miss Margaret Lowther~~, of New York, to her friend in Pennsylvania, on his requesting her to send him a POEM, upon the arrival of GENERAL WASHINGTON in that city, as President of the United States.

While deep-felt joy our grateful hearts expand,
To hail the HERO of our native land;
Say shall a simple muse, unskilled in rules,
Untaught in Grecian lore, or Attic schools,
Presume to celebrate the auspicious day
That bade their longing eyes their HOPE survey?
The pleasing talk to nobler strains assign,
Far humbler efforts suit, my friend, with mine.
To sing in plaintive lays disast'rous love,
Or the calm pleasures that our bosoms prove,
When milder friendship sways th'awakened heart,
And blunts with soothing cares misfortunes dart;
Such themes alone my humble strains pourtray,
Yet H------y asks, and ~~I would fain obey~~ [fain would I obey]
Ah! then with partial view these lines survey,
That but a faint idea can convey
Of what we felt when we the Chief beheld,
Who has in VIRTUE as in ARMS excell'd.
So long from our admiring eyes conceal'd,
Now to our ardent gaze at length reveal'd.
In Vernon's shades, oh! matchless man 'twas thine,
When most secluded, most renown'd to shine.
FORTUNE and CHANCE, may glorious deeds produce,
But He who nobly knows how them to use,
Who having acted well his part, retires
Unscorch'd by wild ambition's raging fires,
To the calm pleasures of domestic peace.
And views, with purest joy, the general bliss,
Unconscious, that from him alone it springs,
The chosen servant of the "King of Kings"–
The man's divine–let angels write his name,
In the bright records of eternal fame,

Oh! glorious Chief! To whom each heart pours forth,
The noblest incense at the shrine of worth,
For whom all emulous alike engage,
From lisping youth to late declining age,
Still offering up to Heaven their ardent pray'rs,
For the dear object of a nation's cares.
Great Atlas of our western world! Review,
That grateful world devoted all to you;
That world, which now united with one soul,
Views thee, the great sustainer of the whole:
To thee its wishes, hopes and prospects given,
With the first blessings of approving heaven,
Celestial liberty! whose brilliant rays
By thee reflected, with new splendor blaze.
Then guard, great Chief! the sacred treasure guard,
While happy millions prove the high reward.
—To the bright temple of resounding Fame,
A long illustrious train of worthies came,
For conquered nations, and for worlds explor'd,
For banished ignorance, and for arts restor'd;
Each urg'd his claim, to reign o'er all supreme,
Th' historian's subject and the poet's theme;
But VIRTUE view'd them all with WISDOM'S eyes,
And bade each candidate resign the prize,
To HIM, who blended ALL their claims in ONE,
OUR FATHER, FRIEND, PROTECTOR WASHINGTON!

[Impromptu on the Federal Congress making their first House on the first Day of April, commonly call'd “All Fools Day”!]

TIME to p[P]rejudice laughing said,
You've many strange abuses made,
Behold upon my list appear,
This day, long fam'd thro' many a year.
Prolific folly to produce;
But lo! *now* ceases the abuse!
This day! henceforth shall be *my* pride!
Wisdom and *folly* are *allied*!

[M.L.]

To Miss W------ on New Year's Day, with a painted work basket, on one side of which was Hope, resting with one hand on her anchor, and with the other pointing to the future

Bliss to my friend! such bliss as virtue feels,
When retrospection all the past reveals,
While conscious rectitude each deed approves,
Smiles on the past, and to the future moves!

Oh how my heart expands, again to hail!
Those “chosen few” who o'er each thought prevail,
Wealth or ambition e'er can bring to view,
When purchased by the pangs of an adieu,
To that dear circle, whose approving smile,
Can life of all its various woes beguile!

Ah! when by deep-felt grief my heart was prest,
And all the daughter agoniz'd my breast,
When trembling fear, a ghastly spectre stood,
And drew us struggling in the stormy flood,
How sunk my soul, to weak despair a prey,
While doubt's dark mantle veiled the devious way;
But now to brighter scenes I turn my eyes,
And view “the endearing charities” arise:
While daughter, sister, friend, my heart divide,
And sweetly mixing with the vital tide,
O'er all my frame their influence extend,
Unite their powers and with existence blend!
Oh source extatic of the purest joy!
Oh bliss supreme that time can ne'er destroy!
Affection sweet, to man in pity given,
An *earthly* blossom, perfected in *Heaven*!

Ah! friend belov’d! behold another year,
Smiles on our friendship made by time more dear,
While *hope* points forward with extended view,
To the bright prospect early fancy drew!
Of friendship strength'ning with increasing years,
Of pleasures shared, and of mingled tears;
For such the wond'rous power on hope bestow'd,
The sweet enliv'ner of our dreary road.
She can of space and time the bounds defy,
And to the heart its dearest joys supply.

Even in the gloomy caverns of despair,
She banishes the haggard form of care,
To light and life, restores the sinking soul
And holds o'er misery her mild controul.

Then may the humble present of my love,
Prophetic of her residence still prove,
Oh! may she gild the evening of thy day,
And o'er thy noon extend her brightest ray!!
[M.L.]

[Charades]

[1st]
When past this busy scene of woes,
In my sad *first* the *dead* repose;
Without my *next* no being lives,
Destruction soon its absence gives,
My *whole*, of France's witty sons,
The first, by genius oft' atones,
For piety and faith defied,
Too oft' by wou'd be wits decried.
[M.L.]

[2nd]
Capricious tyrant of the day,
My *first* bids the *Beau monde* obey;
In various forms doth still appear,
By beaux and belles held ever dear.

My *next* (by first a constant place)
In unity shall discord chace,
As forming ev'ry well-joined knot,
That falls to man's precarious lot.

My *whole*, the first of *female* charms,
With double force ~~e~~ven beauty arms; [e'en]
With sense and worth doth still reside,
Thy gentle monitress and guide.

[3rd]
My *first*, a youthful title bears,
Tho' oft the marks of age it wears,
Sometimes 'tis for its value famed,

At others in derision named,
And at its loss, so all agree,
Is fix'd our bliss or misery!

My *next*, the world at large abuse,
And yet it's favors none refuse,
The good, the bad, the rich, the poor,
Alike its influence implore;
Tho' whensoe'er our wishes fail,
Against its pow'r we vainly rail,
And it for all our faults condemn,
Tho' prized as the brightest gem.

My *whole* demands our flowing tears,
When she in virtues form appears;
A blessing oft' by *Heaven* sent,
To teach us, 'twas *its* bounty lent,
And that all hopes of bliss on earth,
Are vain, for mortal is their birth!
[M.L.]

[4th]
My first, from thoughts of guilt war clear,
Yet to all guilty did appear;
Tho' last, first by affection placed,
And lov'd the most, when most disgraced!

Sweet innocence! in thy pure garb arrayed,
Shall false aspersions cast on thee a shade?
No! like the sun when transient mists his splendours shroud,
Thou break'st with double luster from the cloud!

My next, all human kind desire,
Tho' still it flies with meteor fire,
And in a thousand forms deluded,
Adapted to our various moods!

My whole! doth with mild luster shine,
Sent to enlighten and refine,
And by a bright example given,
To teach and lead the way to Heaven!
[M.L.]

[5th]
My first, so sages, wise have said,
O'er man with various sway presides,
Holds the dominion of the head,
And reigns despotic o'er the tides;

My next at heavens command appear'd,
And thro' the world diffus'd new joy,
The dreary face of nature cheer'd,
And bade primaeval darkness fly!

My whole, to love and wisdom dear,
Full oft dispels the glooms of night,
Its pensive pleasure we revere,
And in its influence still delight!
[M.L.]

[Explanation of the Charades
1st-Voltaire. 2Nd-Mode-s-ty.
3rd-Miss-fortune. 4Th-Benjamin
Moore*. 5Th-Moon-Light
*now Bishop of New-York]

To Mr. P-----

THE heart to pensive grief inclin'd,
Still vainly seeks, alas! to find,
Oblivion for its woes!
In festive scenes where pleasure's reign,
Short liv'd's the enjoyment they obtain,
Who sign for lost repose!

Oh! happiness! “our end and aim!”
How *e'er* pursued, our view the *fame*,
Thou smilest to delude!
Still faithless phantom! Still ~~thou~~ it flies,
Or swift assumes some new disguise,
To blight the promis'd good.

Yet, let not the repining sigh,
Teach man *his* wisdom to deny,
[The]-----architect divine!
Tho' grief oppress, and pale disease,
On this frail, trembling frame should seize,

Thy will oh God! be mine.

Then check, my friend, the rising tear,
In brighter scenes doth now appear;
The sharer of thy heart!
Angels thy Fanny shall restore,
Who, smiling, views thee from that shore,
Where you no more shall part.
[M.L.]

To Mr. P.

With thee th'attentive muse has strayed,
And cull'd with thee each various flow'r;
With thee each mortal theme survey'd,
And shar'd with thee th' sprightly hour.

Hail favor'd votry of the nine,
Friendship to thee this tribute pays,
Wisdom and taste thy thoughts refine,
And harmonize thy polish'd lays.

Then let not politician's schemes,
Detach thee from the muses train,
For sweeter far the poets dreams,
Than all ambition e'er did feign.

And *Thalia* now the wreath doth twine,
For *Bland* and *thee*, to genius due,
Then haste! in *comic regions* shine,
And our concerted plan pursue.

So shall the witty hint produce,
A monument of lasting fame,
With which *Apollo*'ll not refuse,
To grace Columbia's rising name.
[M.L.]

A Fragment of an Irregular Ode

Where Liberty celestial maid,
Has fix'd her adamantine feat,
A new Par[n]assian base is laid,
To which the tuneful nine retreat.

See the Muses fav'rite hill,
On Columbia's plains arise;
Hear sweet murmurs of its rill;
And see where Pegasus now flies.

On Hudson's banks Apollo tunes his lyre;
For themes to vast he adds another Muse;
And bids the modest Lowther to aspire,
To be the tenth, nor durst the maid refuse.
The Tuneful nine, fair Margaret have embrac'd,
She the tenth Muse, the nine has higly grac'd.

The Landscape [written in view of New York]

See the varied landscape round,
   Op'ning to reflection's view,
While our grateful hearts resound
   Praises, *where* all praise is due.

See the murmuring waters flow,
   Beating 'gainst the sea-girt shore,
While the summer breezes blow,
   Vessels gliding smoothly o'er.

Yonder, domes on domes arise,
   Dwels not wild ambition there?
Pride and state, in courtly guise?
   Gentle friend, ah! here repair.

Here no envious cares molest,
   Nature is our only guide;
Calm and peaceful is the breast,
   Where contentment doth reside.

See upon a fertile plain,
   Busy reapers in a row,
Bind in sheaves the ripened grain,

And with dex'trous movement mow.

Sons of grandieur! Why deride?
Labour gives a keener zest,
Than by dainties ~~r~~are~~'s~~ supplied,
To the sons of wealth and rest.

Cease ye impious to complain,
Bliss alike to all is given,
If *some* joys we wish in vain,
Others make the measure even!

Now more distant view yon spire,
There the nymphs and swains repair,
Clad in holyday atire,
Void I ween of worldly care!

Wealth nor interest here destroy,
Mutual wishes, hopes to please;
Gilded snares ~~for to~~ decoy, [that oft]
Gentle minds from peace and ease.

Now behold on Jersey's shore,
Various scenes salute the eyes,
Nature ope's her boundless store;
Let our grateful incense rise!

Woods, and vales, and hills unite,
Tranquil waters, a~~z~~zure skies,
All is form'd to give delight,
Deign, my friend, these scenes to prize.

Friendship chids [es] thy long delay,
At they absence I repine,
Why neglectful do'st thou stray,
Heedless how our days decline.

Come, thy presence can improve,
Every scene, and wake new joy,
Every rising doubt remove;
Every anxious care destroy!
[M.L.]

On the Recovery of the President of the United States from a Dangerous Illness

Behold conven'd in mournful state,
The *virtues*, long with bliss elate;
Each brow a gloom unusual wears,
Each heart oppress'd by grief appears;
"*The general friend*, to pain a prey,
No longer charms each fear away,"
Said *Liberty*, and hung her head,
While sorrow soon the tidings spread!
Benevolence scarce check'd her tears,
Such as desponding worth reveres,
Connubial Love, with anguish press'd,
And *Patriotism* smote his breast!
While gentle *Pity* heav'd a sigh,
And fearful rais'd th' imploring eye!
Patience strove t' appear serene,
But anxious was her placid mien!
In gloomy moode, stern *Justice* sate,
And *Fortitude* in danger great;
And *Temperance* in manners mild,
With *Charity* wept like a child!
When lo! sweet *Hope* with joy illum'd,
While round celestial radiance bloom'd!
"From *all* let grateful incense rise,
I come commission'd from the skies,
To your united pray'rs *he's* given,
Restored to health by smiling Heaven!
Who yet admits of this delay,
From bliss supreme, in realms of day,
Since his lov'd *Country's* dear success,
He's still preferr'd to *happiness*!"
[M.L.]

To Dr. Moyes, the blind Philosopher

What tho' for thee no splendid sun appear,
And varying seasons deck in vain the year,
Nor human form e'er caught thy wond'ring gaze,

Which speaks in accents loud its maker's praise!
Depriv'd of *lights* all animating ray,
You still enjoy unclouded *mental* day:
For thy “mind's eyes” extensive view,
Surveys all nature's system thro';
And the great source of all her laws,
The sole, divine, creative cause.
Ah! let not man impious rail,
Almighty justice holds the scale,
And if *one* boon's denied by Heaven,
With partial hand *another's* given.
Thus tho' Darkness clouds thine *eyes*,
Thy soaring *mind* ascends the skies,
And fired with pure aetherial flame,
Survey's the source from whence it came;
While ev'ry *latent* spark divine,
In Philosophic splendors shine;
Dispers'd the shades of ignorance fly,
For '*reft* of light, you light *supply*!
[M.L.]

Ode to Industry

'Tis thine, oh labour! to bestow,
Delights the wealthy never know;
On thee, thy sister health attends,
For health and thee were ever friends,
Thy glowing cheek, thy sparkling eye,
Proclaiming loud the tender tye;
While on thy vig'rous steps await;
(With future prospects still elate)
Sweet smiling hope, who often chears,
And dissipates the labourers fears,
With distant good his bosom fills.
Painting the harvest while he tills:
For, when first, by angry Heaven,
Frail man from Paradise was driven,
The flaming Seraph, hope bestow'd,
To lure him thro' life's gloomy road,
His cares to lessen, toils sustain
And lighten half his load of pain!

For see, of ev'ry joy bereft,
None e'er so wretched yet was left
But that sweet hope would still appear
And check awhile the rising tear,
Some untried prospect bring to view,
Each faded pleasure to renew;
Or comfort should each earthly comfort fail,
Even o'er the grave and death prevail;
Presenting when this world is past,
Blessings that shall forever last.
Then smile, ye sons of labour smile,
Success at length shall crown your toil;
Fulfilling thus the eternal doom *
Dispell'd shall be each anxious gloom.
And you enjoy a sweet repose
When life is hast'ning to a close;
Of peace and competence possest,
And calm content that lulls to rest,
For labour still can these insure,
From anguish and remorse secure!
Then may your lowly joys be mine,
Far distant from ambition's shrine,
(Where soon the glit'ring phantoms fade)
A useful life, by virtue sway'd.

**3d. chapter of Genesis*

~~Wrote~~ [Written] for the Dreaming Society, of which I was once a member [and of which Dr. TL was President]

'Tis visionary all!

Thou who taught me *first* to dream,
Smile bright *fancy* on our theme;
For to dreams alone we owe,
Sprightly joys, and deep-felt woe!
We're actors all, old Shakespeare said,
We're dreamers all, shall be displayed.

In early youth what visions rise,
What glowing dreams young hope supplies;
The world—a paradise of joy,
Its pleasures—such as ne'er can cloy;
For bourne on fancy's wings we fly
O'er all that can create a sigh,
And basking in bright fortunes ray,
Enjoy a clear unclouded day,
Until alas! some dire mishap
Awakes us from the pleasing nap,
And bids us mourn those blessings past,
Which ah! we dream'd in vain, would last,
That lover's dream, is nothing new,
Ideal charms they still pursue,
Neglectful of the just and true;
'Till dull *realities* appear,
And sad *experience* proves too clear;
Who builds not on bright virtues base,
With dreamers soon will find a place.
The merchant dreams of posts obtain'd,
Nor do they from *their* dreams awake,
'Till money fails, and friends forsake.
The lawyer too, who clients find,
Still in the general vision joins,
And oft so strangely dreams prevail,
Justice sits nodding o'er her scale;
Tho' judges are arrang'd around,
Whose gowns and wigs ~~speak depth~~ [appear] profound
Even doctors too, as I've been told,
Among the sect are roll'd,
Pronouncing with supreme decision,
That life and death are but a vision.
The poet—ah what dreams assail,
What visions round him still prevail?
Now so[a]ring light on wings of air,
Now whelm'd beneath the waves of care;
The child of laughter and of tears,
Still vainly scourg'd by hopes and fears,

Condemn'd no medium e'er to know,
But in extremes his life to flow;
While smoothly with the plodding throng,
The sons of dullness dream along.
[M.L.]

Address to the Diety
Written on a Moon-light Evening

The blue expanse serenely clear,
No low'ring cloud doth now obscure,
But round a thousand worlds appear,
Which shall to latest time endure.

Thou great, first cause, who form'd the plan,
Who gave to all to know their course,
From Heav'n's high arch to feeble man,
Sustain'd by thy exhaultless source.

Ah! let thy influence impart,
To lead me thro' life's rugged road,
Meek piety, which lures the heart,
To its last peaceful drear abode.

So shall my days, tho' mark'd with woe,
Tho' *early* taught, alas! to feel!
Without a murmur smoothly flow,
Resign'd to thy all gracious will.
[M.L.]

On the Death of Miss Alice Colden
Addressed to Miss M-------

Ah! friend beloved! in sorrow doubly dear,
While fond affection prompts the kindred tear,
The weeping muse to deep-felt grief a prey,
Would sooth her anguish with a mournful lay,
O'er Ella's tomb pour forth her hopeless moan,
While misery heaves the agonizing groan.
In bounteous hour the lovely maid was given,

A bright transcript of “all we guess of Heav'n,”
But ah! too pure, too good on earth to stay,
Death call'd the beauteous mourner soon away,
Angels beheld her with approving eyes,
And smiling claim'd a sister to the skies;
Then cease, ah cease, ye *selfish* tears to flow,
Since bliss is *her*'s, impious is *our* woe;
Yet memory, wretched memory, loves to rove,
O'er the lost joys of friendship and of love,
To Spring-Hill hastes, where first our Ella known,
Made every yielding heart her virtues own,
Then brightest shining “in affliction's night,”
When promised pleasures too their early flight;
No *common* woes were her's, ye feeling few,
Approach, and with a tear her face bedew;
For ah! now rushing on my view appears,
The *daughter's* anguish, and the *sister's* fears,
When bourne o'er Hudson's ever-rolling wave,
Revered virtue an asylum gave,
And fondly thought the beating tempest o'er,
Fortune would frown, and sorrow wound no more;
But ah! vain thought, again the storm descends,
And trembling nature to affliction bends;
Grief treads on grief, no hope of lost repose,
“Woes cluster rare are solitary woes!”
Another parent doom'd alas to mourn,
By cruel death from filial fondness torn.
Again consigns to agonizing grief,
The hopeless heart despairing of relief,
Nor cease'd [even] here, misfortune's stern decree,
Compell'd t'explore the dangers of the sea,
On alien shores to waste the tedious day,
And pensive sigh a ling'ring year away:
That period past once more false pleasure smil'd,
And the worn heart of former woes beguil'd;
Speak you who best can tell, the bliss we proved,
When reunited to the friend we loved,
When fancy's glowing pencil sweetly drew,
Bright scenes of friendship to our raptured view;
Alas! how clouded soon, the faithless beam
For on her lovely cheek the fading rose
While slow disease consumed each vital pow'r,
And envious blighted ev'ry op'ning flower;
Ah! me, resigned in youthful beauty's bloom,

[Lo!] ~~Now~~ Ella sleeps within th' untimely *tomb*.
Here, friendship *here*, thy foot-steps oft shall stray,
And weeping genius pour th' impassioned lay;
Here fond affection shall with tears bedew,
The grass-green sod, dear to reflection's view,
While mild religion shall descend to trace,
Each virtue that adorns the human race,
All, all united in a heart so pure,
That Heav'n ordain'd it should not long endure;
But claim'd here early to receive the prize
Of endless bliss, in realms beyond the skies.
Oh! much loved shade! If angels deign to know,
The frail desires of mortals here below,
[Still] Oh! with thy wonted tenderness impart,
A ray of comfort to thy Beulah's heart;
[And] ~~Oh~~ bid thy [gentle] ~~much lov'd~~ sister cease to mourn,
Her feeling breast with deep-felt anguish torn,
[So shall] ~~And bid~~ thy numerous friends no longer grieve,
[For] ~~Since~~ thou art bless'd beyond what we conceive.

[M.L.]

To Mrs. W-------, on my Birth-Day, the first of the New-Year

Oh thou! by whatsoever name,
I to thy friendship make my claim;
  Matur'd by many a year!
While time fly's on with rapid wing,
Oh may each varying season bring
  Joys pure, refin'd, sincere!

And still as *this* returning day,
Awakens *memory's* piercing ray;
  To dwell on pleasures past,
When hand in hand we gaily stray'd,
While *mutual* bliss our bosoms sway'd,
  A bliss too great to last!

Or turning to the scenes of grief,
Where sympathy still brought relief,
  Recall the shades of woe!
Where sweet affection dry'd each tear,
Or, caus'd another to appear,
  In unison to flow!

Oh! may this day that bade *me* live,
Life's mingled portion to receive,
Which in *extremes* I've prov'd,
Still view in me *thy* friendship blest,
My heart thy bosom's constant guest,
Beyond all other's lov'd!

For now, tho' more endearing ties,
Thy happier fate, my friend supplies,
And sway thy every thought,
Thy heart to friendship ever true,
Can feel its milder influence too,
With smiling virtue fraught!

Ah then! As in life's early morn
Affection did our hours adorn,
And dissipate each gloom!
So in the evening of our day,
Oh may it with benignant ray,
Attend us to the tomb!
[M.L.]

Ode to Melancholy

Hence ye scenes of noise and folly,
Welcome musing melancholy!
Come with me to seek the shade,
Where no mirthful sounds invade;
But the plaintive tear of woe,
Bids the eye to overflow,
While amid the dreary gloom,
Sad we dwell upon each tomb,
That has numbered with the dead,
Some dear friend forever fled;
Whose lov'd converse, once could cheer,
Sorrow in her cavern drear,
And allay the pangs of pain,
Tho' they tremble[d] in each vein!
Goddess of the pallid cheek?
Let thy sighs expressive speak;
Here with me thy vigils keep,
Man was born to “wake and weep!:
Still to pour his hopeless moan,
From the cottage to the throne!

From the day that gave him birth,
Till returned to parent earth!
   Come then, gently, soothing power,
Thine be every pensive hour,
Thine! who bidst the soul arise,
Soaring to its native skies;
While religion's brighter rays,
Endless scenes of bliss displays!
For with thee she loves to dwell,
In thy moss grown, solemn cell!
Far removed from noise and folly,
“Hail divinest melancholy!”
[M.L.]

To Lavinia, on the Death of her Father

Now, the sable shade of night,
   O'er creations face is spread;
And the pale moon's glimmering light
   Wakes the soul to pensive dread!

Sad I dwell on pleasures past,
   Think on thee so justly dear,
Lament the die that fate has cast,
   And o'er *lifes* sorrow drop a tear?

For who so happy—who so blest?
   To tread *its* ever changing round,
And view no hour by woe opprest,
   When keen misfortunes deeply wound!

Yet, oft afflictions, blessings are,
   That pitying *Heaven* in love bestows,
To raise our hopes and wishes *there,*
   Where we alone can find repose!

Where every tender tye dissolved,
   By unrelenting death's cold hand,
Shall when some years have swift resloved,
   Revive, a sweetly, smiling band!

Lavinia! yes! we *there* shall meet,
   Those much lov'd friends, we now deplore;
Their kindred souls, in mansions greet,

Where care and sorrow are no more!

Even now, upheld on *faith's* bright wing,
Thy parent's reverend shade I view,
While raptured seraphs round him sing,
The endless joys to virtue due!

Ah! would we then to earth recall?
The *selfish* wish, my friend, restrain;
His portion here, of *bliss*, how *small*?
How *large*, alas *his* share of *Pain*?

For tho thy sweet affection chear'd,
The lingering hours of life's decline,
And with a pious duty rear'd,
To *filial* love a lasting shrine!

Age and *disease* his powers consum'd,
And urg'd him to a happier clime;
Where ev'ry earth-born care's entomb'd,
And every pleasure is sublime!

Then cease to shed the fruitless tear,
Thy Parent lives! in realms of bliss,
Remov'd to that immortal sphere,
Where blooms unfading happiness!
[M.L.]

To Dr. K----------, on his Marriage

Joy to my friend! each joy the heart can prove,
In the sweet union of a virtuous love!
Bless'd source from whence each dear connection flows,
That Heaven in pity to our state bestows!
For what were life without those tender ties,
That round the heart in fond succession rise?
Son! brother! husband! each endearing name,
That lifts the soul above its mortal frame,
To share the joys to heavenly Seraphs known,
Where “God is Love” and rules by Love alone.

Fair dawn the prospect opening to your view,
Oh may it equal all e'er fancy drew!
Now low'ring cloud send forth one gloomy ray,

But youth steal off with unperciev'd decay!
Affection strength'ning with increasing years,
Smiling conduct thee through this “vale of tears”
Divide each woe that man is born to bear,
The gentle soother of thy ev'ry care!
While bosom comforts, and unborrow'd joy,
Each heart-felt transport that can never cloy,
glide on unsullied by afflictions tear,
'Till thy rapt' soul shall brighter scenes survey,
In the unfading realms of every during day!
[M.L.]

To Miss W---------, on New Years Day

Behold the herald of the new-born year,
This smiling morn in robes of joy appear,
While from each tongue congratulations flow,
That give a short forgetfulness to woe!
Bless'd be that power which bids the mourner smile!
Which can the wretch of one sad hour beguile!
'Tis thine, oh friendship! thine the extatic art,
To wake to joy the long desponding heart!
Even from the hand of time, his scythe to rend,
And to eternity thy reign extend.

Then may thy choicest blessings on my friend,
Unnumber'd still thro ev'ry year attend!
Her life as radient as her polish'd mind,
By sense enlight'ned, and by taste refined;
Still harmoniz'd to pleasure, smoothly flow,
Soft as her notes that bid our bosoms glow,
When “wak'd to extasy the living lyre,”
Sweet musick's rapturous powers our souls inspire!

Ah! skilled alike each hour to improve,
Or in the maze of pleasure light to move!
Tell by what strange mysterious cause we *now* rejoice?
Thus deaf to nature's deaf to reason's voice,
Which bids us wake reflection's bitter tear,
That still should flow o'er Time's unresting bier!
As *this* returning day, to memory's view,
Recalls how many we have bade adieu!
While on the former, each has shut the grave,
As on the ocean, wave succeeds to wave!

Ah! blindness! tho enwrap'd in winter's gloom,
Soon shall sweet spring's renewed roses bloom;
But when thy fleeting spring, oh life! is o'er,
Alas! we hail its bless'd return no more!
On Time's bleak stream born rapidly away,
Each movement hastes with unperceived decay,
To that dread "country from whose aweful bourne,
No traveller has ever known return!"
Forgive, sweet friend, the moralizing strain,
The muses still are privileg'd to complain,
And from a double cause the lay has flow'd,
As 'twas this day that life on me bestow'd;
And birth-days ever-claim the mourning tear,
~~As sad memento's of the former year!~~*
Yet while I mourn, sweet hope presents to view,
A blessing that shall faded joy renew,
In thy lov'd converse tells me I shall find,
Each rich resource of an immortal mind;
While ev'ry varying season as it flies,
Shall give encrease to those enduring ties,
That o'er each *future* year shall still preside,
Wisdom our friend, instructress and our guide!
[M.L.]

*As the sad Funeral's of the former year

"A Birth Day this, Alas it does appear"
"'Tis but the Funeral of Another Year"

Elegy
Supposed to be written by Rivers, the day before the engagement in which he was mortally wounded.

Worn by conflicting hopes and fears,
Where shall earth's weary pilgrim rest?
His path bedewed with constant tears,
With anguish torn his tortured breast!

Ah where forget in sweet repose,
Each blasted joy for ever fled?
Lose the remembrance of his woes,

Ah! where! but with the silent dead?

Oh ye! who never knew to prove,
By sad experience what I feel,
Bless'd in the objects of your love,
Ye know not what I would reveal!

The grief-worn day! the sleepless night!
The world a desart, dark and drear,
Where all that once could give delight,
For claims the wailing tear!

My only wish! my hope, my heav'n,
Say what can now attract desire?
For by despair's dark tempest driven,
For-ever fled's my wonted fire!

Nor Hope can give, or Fame impart,
A ray to chear the deep'ning gloom!
To those who mourn like me, at heart,
The only asylum's the tomb!

And hap'ly when my Julia hears,
How low he lies who lov'd so true!
By pity mov'd, her flowing tears,
Shall my untimely fate bedew.

Perchance too, sorrow o'er my grave,
Shall still her pensive vigils keep,
There oft retire the good and brave,
To pause on life, to “wake and weep!”
[M.L.]

The Wish.
Spoken Extempore.

Far from the gilded scenes of state,
Ah! may it be my humble fate,
T' enjoy the sweets of calm repose,
A bliss that Virtue only knows;
And as my moments gently glide,
Remote from Arrogance and Pride,
May Heaven to crown its blessings send,
Some graceful, tender, soothing friend!

Who shall augment my ev'ry joy,
And half the weight of woe destroy!
Then may no worldly wish intrude,
To shade with care our solitude,
But still our breasts be ever sway'd
By sweet Content! celestial maid!
While mild Religion lends her ray,
And points to scenes of brighter day,
Where ev'ry earth born care shall cease,
And we repose in endless peace.
[M.L.]

The Apology
To Mrs. D--------

O'er weakness, Justice drops a tear,
If from no vicious source it flows,
Nor can resentment harbour e'er
Where mild compassion glows.

Lo! few and transient are the joys,
That man is doom'd to know,
Each moment some dear bliss destroys,
The prey of ev'ry woe.

And shall we thoughtless of our case,
Those few forbear to prove,
And still deny the sweet embrace
Of friendship and of love.

Ah! no, the wanderer receive,
Repentant she returns,
Ardent thy friendship to retrieve,
With hope her bosom burns!

From no de[p]ravity of will
Did her offence proceed,
For spite of all, she loves thee still,
And blushes at the deed.

And wilt thou cast her from thine arms,
An alien to thy breast?
Ah! no! these sighs that wrath disarms,
And *Pity* pleads the best!

[M.L.]

Written During a Storm

Ah! cease, ye blustering winds, to blow,
    Ye elements of conflict cease;
Where shall the weary child of woe,
    Repose her weary head in peace?

The hapless wanderers on the main,
    To every anxious fear a prey;
Ah! see dark horrors round them reign,
    Nor hope emit one chearing ray!

So on *Life's* treacherous *ocean* cast,
    If round *Misfortune's* billows roll,
Keen blows *Neglect's* cold, cutting blast,
    And chills the ardour of the soul!

Oh ye! Who glide on Pleasure's stream,
    Ne'er by Experience taught to feel;
Frown not upon the woe fraught theme,
    Least it perchance a tear should steal.

For hard's the heart, and cold the breast,
    Which mourns not in a night like this;
Full many a wretch who sinks to rest,
    'Reft of each long expected bliss!

For vainly has deceiving hope,
    Presented to their longing view,
Each dear, relative tender tye,
    Which dearer still by absence grew.

For now no anxious friend shall hail,
    With rapturous joy their wish'd return,
Man's feeble tye on bliss, how frail;
    His brightest prospects doom'd to mourn.

Loud howls the storm! the waters roar!
    Ah! be that rising sigh supprest,
For grief and pain can wound no more,
    Life's “storm is past, and they're at rest.”

[M.L.]

[manuscript poem following Margaret's section]

Written on the Death of my Son John William, who Died November 7th 1792, aged 4 Months.

Great God of Nature! Thou in All the same
From the low Insect to the ethereal Frame!
Whose awful fiat gives the funeral Doom,
Sparks into Life, or lays Within the Tomb!
Shall thy Weak Creature dare oppose thy Will
Nor bid each impious murmur to be still;
Shall she with bursting tears and strugling sighs,
In sad repinings let her sorrows rise?
Alas! by Nature weak tho' born to bear
"The Flesh will quiver where the Pincers tear"
Tho Piety extend her Heavenly light,
The Soul will tremble in "Afflications Night"
Then Lord forgive the supplicating voice
That thus implored "the measure and the choice"
If for my sins thou dost chastisement send
Let Pain and anguish every fibre rend;
Let my Weak Frame to dire Disease a prey,
In ceaseless Misery waste its-self away.
But save my Heart, Oh from distraction save!
And snatch my Infant from the yawning grave!
My God! My Saviour! hear my ardent Prayer!
Oh save my Child! oh save me from despair!
My Child! my child! Must he for me endure,
Tis maddening agony beyond a Cure!
Thus rav'd in Accents Wild my feeble Mind,
By Hope forsaken, and to Doubt consign'd;
For in that awful hour, smote by his Rod,
I dar'd t'arraign the justice of my God!
'Till mild Religion of celestial sight
Illum'd my Soul with more than mortal light!
To my rapt view seraphic Scenes display'd
Where Innocence in Angel Forms array'd,
Pour'd forth the grateful tribute of their Songs
To Him to whom alone All praise belongs!
Glory to God! let purest Incense rise!
Glory to God!omniscient, just and wise!
Who sav'd our Infant Souls by early Death,
From Sin, and Misery's polluting breath,
Who are yet tried, the high reward obtain,

Unknown to Grief, and only tasting Pain!
Glory to God! Ye wretched cease to mourn
By Death we Live, to endless Blessings borne!
Glory to God! immutable's his Law
His mercy great, Resign with Faithful awe!
M.L.P.

[manuscript poem between Margaret's and John's sections]

To Mrs. Maria T-----r with a Breast Pin, in form of a Crescent [manuscript]

Sweet friend! this little Emblem wear
Of Cynthia's mild endearing Light
Oh! could it sooth thy every Care
And cheer thee in Affliction's Night!

Ne'er should thy bosom heave a sigh,
Nor one dark cloud obscure thy bliss,
But wing'd with joy thy moments fly,
In unalloyed Happiness!
Vain wish! Alas too surely vain!
Since All are Born to Weep and Die!
To drag a Grief of length'ning chain
And seek a Refuge in the Sky!
Yet Friendship's sympathetic power
Can still a soothing charm impart;
And when Misfortune's darkest low'r
Illume the deep desponding heart!
Yes! like the Silver Queen of Night,
When Pleasure's sunbeams disappear,
She sheds her soft benignant light,
Reflected from the dewey Tear!

Far more refreshing to the Mind
Than All that Splendor ever gave,
She shines a Seraph, Heaven assign'd,
To Triumph even o'er the Grave!

Then when in Absence doom'd to pine;
Remembrance shall alone remain.
Oh guard with care her sacred Shrine
Nor let her brightness know a Wane.
M.L.P.

[manuscript poems after John's section]

Occasioned by a well known Anecdote in Glos'ter

Said Frank to Joe now pr'y thee Lad
Yon goodly Fish is it a Shad?
A Shad besure quoth simpering Joe!
But John came in and cried Wo-Wo! +
A Shad my Boy you surely mock
Why look again it is a Rock
A Rock said Joe La! so it is
When you're not by its “Hit or Miss”!!!

+ a term made use of by the Plough Boys to stop oxen (her note)

To Miss Smith D------ written in the name of Mr. F. Page

Mischievous Smith whose sole employ
Is still each day to forge a chain
Wouldst thou fair Freedom's power destroy
And o'er our Sex despotic reign?

Know equal rights we here demand
In mutual Services engage;
Exchange thy Heart, and yield thy Hand,
And Live in a recording Page
M.L.P.

The three Aspects of a Physician, Written at the request of Doctor S---------

While restless on the Bed of Pain
Beneath a Fever's burning reign
Haste! Haste! the Doctor hither bring
To save me from Death's venom'd Sting
The Doctor comes—with Hope He chears
And as an Angel he appears!
The Cure compleat, a God is view'd
And vow'd eternal Gratitude!
But soon how chang'd! for Lo! we see
The Doctor claims th'accustom'd Fee!
Money's the Source of every Evil
And now indeed He is the Devil!
M.L.P.

To Miss J. L----------

Indeed! dear friend, it is too True
A Country Wife has much to do;
No moment finds of peaceful leisure
To ope the Muses sacred Treasure
From Books and Poetry must turn
To mark the Labours of the Churn
Or worse than poor Arachne's doom,
Watch o'er the progress of the Loom
For When I would compose a Lay,
Come! Mistress come! The cotton weigh!
Like the Dull Owl's ill-omen'd scream
Awakes me from my pleasing dream
Proclaiming thus with dire portent
The Death of Wit, and Sentiment!
And Castles tho' e'en built in Air
It takes us Time still to repair,
While Time Alas! for-ever flies
And thus each fond Illusion dies!
Ah yes! 'tis true, upon my Life!
No Muse was ever yet a Wife.
For Muses, I have heard it said
Tho' often wooed do never wed!
Search All Parnassian An[ ]
Well skill'd in Heliconic[ ]
[No?] Children's cries did e'er invade
[Th'?] inspiring stillness of the Shade
Where underneath his favorite Tree
Apollo “wakes to ecstacy
The living Lyre!” while round each Muse
Does its harmonious Notes diffuse
The Muses too 'fright I ween
[In?] Poultry yards were never seen
Nor as “I live and am a Sinner,”
Were ever known to dress for Dinner
No future Cares on them intrude
No need have they of Cloaths or Food.
And tho' in Learning they delight
And oft take pleasure to [indite?],
School Mistresses! Not they indeed,
They never taught to Spell or Read
No thought sublime, or sally bright
Their Pupils ever put to flight!

Thus then, my friend, you see 'tis vain
[Gainst?] [illegible] I may complain
[ ] never more may hope to sing
[ ] [ink?] of the Castalian Spring
[ ] and to Drudge along thro' Life
[ ] <u>domestic Wife</u>
M.L.P.

Appendix B: Selected Poems by John Page, St. George Tucker, and Friends

The following poems are discussed in the text of the thesis. Margaret's handwritten additions are noted in brackets.

[On the opposition of the Legislature of Virginia to a general [illegible] for the support of Religion.
Address'd to the Printer of the Virginia Gazette]

You will receive, I do suppose,
What I shall write, tho' not in prose;
Nor think it odd at such a time,
That I should send my thoughts in rhyme.
I do expect to meet a scorner,
So do not give me Poet's Corner;
Place me in more conspicuous view,
And do as you'd be done unto.
I will without more preface then,
Tell you why I wield my pen:
I see a question 'tis become,
And much disputed too by some,
Whether religion at dead lift,
Be longer left to make a shift;
Should look for miracles again,
Or voluntary aids in vain;
Or by some strict compulsive laws,
Compel her sons to prop her cause.
To clear this knotty point of doubt,
And make the matter better out—
Let's first consider what's her use,
And why the state her aid should chuse;
And first without her 'tis confest,
The state would find her sons a pest;
Unbridled lust and lawless power,
Would all that's valuable devour,
Her sacred influence would cease,
To guard our sweet domestic peace—
What else allegiance can secure,
Or truth in all our courts procure?

What else can check the wicked thought,
Or e'er has real virtue taught?
What government did ever thrive,
Which did not keep her flame alive?
And shall we with any face
Pretend to have least sign of grace?
If after often thanking heaven,
For many proofs of kindness given,
We fain would leave it in a lurch,
And bid it look to its own church.
As if religion of no weight,
Were really a trick of state.
And we so wise need no such thing,
As from its influence can spring;
On honour and on moral rules,
Relying for a check on fools;
And with a philosophic pride,
Regligions sacred aid deride;
But how can Christians, Turks or Jews,
To support their sects refuse?
Have Jews the tribe of Levi's lot,
'Midst revolution of the state forgot;
Have christians all remembrance lost,
How much their ancestors it cost,
To support their church and preachers,
And to encourage holy teachers?—
On recollecting what was done,
Wish they all such expence to shun;
Thinking it would be far better,
Their teachers knew not single letter—
By inspiration pray and preach
And congregations gratis teach.
This plan some sect'ries taste would hit,
And just as well free thinkers fit;
They the prevailing sect would be,
These triumph by their sophistry—
Learning with learned sects decline,
And impious wit triumphant shine,

'Till bigotted enthusiast zeal,
Break forth and crush the common weal.
[J.P.]

On Reading a Piece in one of the New York Gazettes, denying the right of the People to instruct their Representatives or to have Committees.

Committees, conventions, and old Congress too,
Agreed that this maxim will always hold true;
That *people* may meet, and consult when they please,
On the good of the state when their leaders them tease.

But now we're told by a very wise man,
This doctrine is false, and a dangerous plan;
'Twill stir up sedition and insolence great,
Which will one day or other endanger the state:

This consequence follows, and follow'd always,
From the oldest rebellion to the late one of *Shays*,
Now in this our wise man is pretty near right;
For none of the committees could have kept in sight

All Britain's tyrannical deeply laid schemes,
Which in them were statesnmen's an orator's themes,
This every American knows is a fact,
Committees, town-meetings repeal'd the stamp-act.

Committees, town-meetings gave Congress its birth,
And conventions to Congress have given its worth:
No friend to our government then should despise
The meetings which gave our government rise.

'Tis *Britain* most surely has reason to curse
This republican doctrine, and think it much worse,
Than Shays's worst enemy ever did think,
When from Shays's resentment he was forced to shrink.

For *she* knows what dire wars this maxim did bring,

And divided her kingdom, distracted her King;
Expell'd one poor King, and brought in another,
Whose wife took the throne of her father and mother.

But we have not Nobles nor kinglings nor Kings,
Nor will we be pester'd by any such things;
Fair freedom alone our meetings will view,
No lover of freedom our meetings shall rue.

Should Congress the aid of our meetings require,
In patriot flames they would see them on fire;
But should Congress forget the duty they owe,
Committees 'tis hop'd would soon let them know,

That freemen have right to new model their state,
When their servants grow proud, and would be too great;
Or treat their constituents like children or fools,
And use them as if they were made for their tools.
New-York, August 11th, 1789

[J.P.]

Written in the H------e of R----p-----s, on Wednesday, March 17, 1790 by J.P.

Though clouds should the Heavens o'er spread,
And the sun be quite hid from my eye,
Yet cheerful I'll hold up my head,
For the day of my transport is nigh.

For Peggy's as sunshine to me,
She brightens my prospect each day;
By her I now clearly can see,
On earth and to heaven my way.

Though storms should deep plow up the main,
And thunders should shake the whole land;
Quite free should I be from all pain,
For the day of my transport's at hand.

When Peggy's soft voice I shall hear,
   No storms of the mind can arise;
But sooth'd and serene I'll appear,
   Though whirl-winds should darken the skies.

Though flocks from their folds should all flee,
   And the wolves should be prowling around,
Yet I'll smile with a heart full of glee,
   For the day of my transport I've found.

The warbling of birds in the grove,
   The fragrance which flow'rs send forth,
Not so sweet as the voice of my love,
   And without her can never have worth.

But should Heav'n be pleased to smile,
   On the day which makes Peggy my own;
With nymphs, swains their cares my beguile,
   Their bosoms with joy overflown.

May the sun shine serene in the sky,
   All nature partake of my joy;
May none on that day heave a sigh,
   With their bliss may they have no alloy.

To reply to your question my friend,
   When the hour of transport will be,
Ten days I must bid you attend,
   Before you can hear it from me.
[J.P.]

Epitaph on Mrs. M--------'s *Canary bird*.
Underneath this stone doth lie,
As sweet a bird, as e'er did fly,
Which when alive did comfort give,
To as sweet a bird as e'er did live.

Alas the lovely bird is fled,

And left its lovely mate half dead;
Half dead with widow'd grief he sighs,
'Tis thought he every moment dies!
Half dead with sympathetic grief,
His mistress strove to bring relief;
On his dead mate she darts forth rays,
Enliv'ning as *Canary days*;
“Her eyes to her not half so dear,”
In clouded majesty appear;
Their radient beams can scarce be seen,
Through pearly showers which intervene:
In vain Promethian fire she plies—
E'en in her bosom dead it lies.
But Lesbia wipe away those tears,
And dissipate your linnets cares;
Provide for him another mate,
He'll think no more of his hard fate.
[J.P.]

Queries to Mrs. M'L------e

Has the lovely Linnet yet,
His partner with caresses met?
Does he lay aside all care,
And sprightly as bride-groom appear?
Do they seem with marriage blest?
Have they made their little nest?
Or have you made a sad mistake!
Enough his am'rous heart to break,
A male instead of female giv'n,
The sweetest comfort of kind Heav'n.
I.P.

Epithalamium
On the Marriage of the Canary Bird alluded to in page the 23d.

Sing each tenant of the grove,
And raise each tuneful voice:

My bird has found another love,
Oh with my bird rejoice.

Billing sparrows, cooing doves,
With little smiling sportive loves,
Come my fav'rite bird's caress;
'Gratulate their happiness.

Come gentle Zephyr, on thy wing
Waft the odours of thy spring;
Fan them in their downy nest,
Let them sweetly sink to rest.

Another torch now Hymen light;
But glowing still, and full as bright,
As those for nymphs and swains your bear,
When you match a happy pair.

Lucina of the feather'd throng,
Listen to their ev'ry song;
And lend when call'd thy ready aid;
Be present when each egg is laid.

Phoebus send some airy-spright.
To nurse the unfleg'd young,
When they first essay their flight,
And guide their tuneful tongue.

Canary Isles henceforth shall vie,
With Venus's fav'rite isle;
The queen of Love with partial eye,
On linnets hence shall smile,
For she exulting view'd my linnet's love,
Not less that that of her own constant dove.

I.P.

The sea-born goddess, Queen of Love,
Chose of the feather'd race the dove,

T' express the passion she inspir'd,
In those who by her charms were fir'd.
But Venus now grown out of date,
To brighter Barbara yields her feat;
Her Doves shall be forgotten too,
And Linnets teach us how to woo.
S.G.T.

S.G.T-------r to his friend J---- P----, on his marriage with Miss L------r.

Friend of my heart! may this auspicious day,
Renew those blessings which you once enjoy'd!
O! may they ne'er again be snatch'd away,
Nor e'er again thy peace of mind destroy'd.

May all thy sorrows past be like a dream,
From which the troubled sleeper wakes to bliss;
But all thy past and future blessings seem
As one protracted ~~dream~~ [scene] of happiness.

What e'er of earthly, or of heav'nly charms
Adorn'd thy Fanny's form, or face, or mind,
When bounteous Heaven gave her to thy arms,
O may'st thou, in thy Margaritta find!

Thus, with each charm and grace, and virtue stor'd
Which Heaven propitious to thy Fanny gave,
In HER, thy Fanny's self shall be restor'd,
And e'en on earth, shall triumph o'er the grave!

Williamsburg, March 27, 1790
St.G.T.

To Miss------
Whilst with *light fantastic toe*,
    The mazy round you tread,
I cough and sigh and hardly know,
    How to hold up my head.

Here pensive like your sister's bird,
My widow'd fate I mourn,
Nor from my cage like him have stir'd,
From social comforts torn!

Ah! hapless bird, too well I know,
The sorrows of thy breast!
But let not sorrow daily grow,
And rob thee of all rest.

Fly to thy mistress for relief,
And ask another mate;
She with pity views thy grief,
And soon will change thy state;

But mine, alas! 'tis Heaven alone,
Can view with equal eye;
To me no partner will be shown,
A widower I must die!

But sprightly dance thou lovely maid,
The fav'rite of each muse,
For whom each feeling youth has pray'd,
Whom ev'ry wit would choose,

Let not the bird's nor my distress,
Thy tender bosom move,
But let th'accomplished swain impress
Thine heart with mutual love.

[J.P.]

The following piece was written by a gentleman who had not seen the fragment, page 8th.

The Tenth Muse

Poets now increase your muses,
Ev'ry bard must sing of ten,
Genius ev'ry thought infuses,

Genius guides her attic pen.

Youngest sister of the choir,
Lyres by thee shall now be strung,
Oh wouldst thou our lays inspire,
We would chant the choral song.

Themes sublime in Milton's spirit,
Here with sportive Comus meet,
Each alive in various merit,
Rapture equal each should meet.

*To Miss ******* on receiving from her a painted Work Bag, with the following Lines in a Medallion*

Let Sympathy create the Tie,
For kindred minds can space defy,
And value to each pledge impart,
That wakes the feelings of the heart.
[M.L.]

Yes Sympathy creates the tie,
Which time and space shall both defy;
And value to your pledge imparts,
Which wakes the feelings of our hearts,
Of all whov'e viewed with wond'ring eyes,
The beauteous Work-bag which I prize,
Thy feeling soul thy polish'd lays,
Command esteem and highest praise:
Minerva and each muse combine,
To make you all your sex outshine,
Though artless unadorned my mind,
T'will sympathize with yours I find;
For *"kindred minds"* may sympathize;
Though diff'ring vastly in their size;
Thus sisters tho' unlike in age
Unlike in features too, engage
In acts and sentiments so like,
As oft discerning minds to strike;
And instruments of lesser worth,
Will vibrate sounds the best send forth.
'Tis thus I follow you along,
Enraptur'd with your tuneful song,
Each sentiment which you impart[,]

Thus vibrates sweetly on my heart:
I feel as if inspir'd too,
When your inspir'd works I view.
Ah! then receive the thanks I send,
As coming from your real friend.
A.G.P.

Appendix C: Margaret Lowther Page's Selected Letters

The following letters are discussed in the text of the thesis.

To John Page, esq.
Representative in Congress
Philadelphia
No. 16 Rosewell. February the 16th 1793

If our Sun should always shine—
In Content our Days might flow;
But our pleasures to refine,
See descend the Shades of Woe!

—And I looked!—and behold! There were four letters from you—Four Letters—what a recompense for the Week of Gloom which pass'd away in anxious expectations! My beloved Husband! I perused, and re-perused, and as I read—now a Tear glistened, and then a Smile played—for it requires not a Lavater, to trace in my Countenance, the Emotions of my Heart----------Alas! Poor Number 9! it was indeed, in the very Mail which fell prey to the Robber—for I sent it by Mann, who went down to York Coast, and as it would go in Monday's mail, Tuesday was the Day, in Order, on which you should have received it—for I observe, by the Post Office Mark, your letters all come in 9 Days to York, and I have frequently calculated, and found that you receive mine in the same Period—My dear friend! I am truly Sorry it miscarried—as there were some Expressions in it, intended only for your Eye—yet, they were such as I have no cause to blush at, and which, from misapprehension alone, could be construed as improper;—but it was hard, that you should get both Frank's and Sally's, and that mine only should be lost—I cannot account for it—unless it was in that Letter, that I inclosed the Measure for Peggy's Shoes (and the Robber feeling it, supposed it to be Bank Notes) which to the best of my Remembrance, it was! Blessed little Soul! I have sent you another Measure, tho' I am afraid it will now be too late for you to get them made for her—but you can try, for she runs about so much we can hardly keep her in Mockisons. I sent you as list of what Articles were most in want of—but I forgot to mention 1 ounce of Thread No. 20, for making up the Sheeting; and a Pocket Book, which I wish you to procure for me, if it is ever so common a One. Did I tell you that Edy, who is surprisingly recovered, begged you would bring her three or four yards of Blue half Thicks. I sent to Williamsburg on Friday, received the Articles, shipped by Mr. Barnes, all in good Order—the east India Sugar is a little inferior to the Loaf we purchase here; We have Tea, and Coffee, to last some Months—but we shall soon be in want of Loaf Sugar, if you can spare the Money. I wish you would bring back half a Dozen Loaves, you can get it so much cheaper in Philadelphia-------

Our friend St. George and his family, were well, and I am happy to inform you, young Taylor is out of Danger, and in a fair way of recovering—it will be a Lesson I

hope to Jack; poor Mr. Tucker has had so much uneasiness—Richard, his Wife, and Sister have been down on a visit to him &, it is said, is perfectly satisfied with Richard's Vindication—but the World—the World believes, and the report is still circulating with additional Horrors!

I am grieved, indeed, to hear of Doctor Tucker's retiring from Public Business—present to him, my affectionate wishes for his happiness, where ever he is, I shall always regard him as your friend, and as a Man in whom I am myself interested, from a pure, and unchanging Esteem!

The Anecdote you relate to me, confirms my Aversion to Cards which is indeed a natural one, for I remember, "when I was a child, and thought as a child" I never liked to see them, and now I think them, at best, but an Apology, for a deficiency in Wit, and Sentiment, and a tacit acknowledgement that we are at a loss what to do with ourselves—My dear Husband! our sentiments are similar in most respects, and if we differ in any, 'tis the French Revolution and Universal Equality! which is fortunate—as I am not much given to discussing Political Subjects!

We have half filled the Tea House, and if there had not been a sudden change in the Weather, should have wholly accomplished it----------

There is to be a brilliant entertainment at Warner Hall, on Thursday next, in honor of the Christening—I shall go—but with how much greater pleasure should I go, were you here to accompany me. Ah! Chosen friend! what is there that gives a zest to any enjoyment like the Presence of a beloved Object?

Greet with friendly salutations, my Countryman, Citizen Ashe, and remember me to Steel, Grove and Macon, and tell [ ] Hartley! I saw a fine Speech of his in the Paper, on [ ] Certificates, which I should have known an [ ] for as you say "his Stile is indeed inimitable"! [ ] also read on of yours, my beloved Husband! on the same subject, with which I was much pleased! Do you know I like this new Title of Citizen amazingly—it is more poetical than Mister.

Th' Aera of Citizen
Is, Lords become Men
And a King in a Den!

—In three Weeks! Yes! in three weeks, we may be re-united to separate no more—my beloved Husband! how my heart exults in the thought and loses in the future all remembrance of the past!—I shall write to you but one Letter more—Adieu! Remember me affectionately to Bob, and May the Angel of Peace minister to your happiness, and Conduct you in safety, thro' the pains of your long Journey, to the Love and tenderness, that awaits you in the Abode of Affection!

Margaret Page—

January 22 1795

Your dear letter of the 5th and Sixth, beloved Sister, relieved me from a great anxiety, as I received not one by Tuesdays Post, the Day I had been accustomed to get them, and knew the Tryal you had to undergoe—Ah! why was I not with you, tenderly does my heart sympathize in all your sufferings—and did it depend on me, happy and independent would be all your future Days, yet I trust the Prospect will soon brighten, and the future make you amends for the Past, a Past, which tho' we cannot forget, it is our Duty to endeavor to be resigned to—

You desire me to inform you particularly of our Situation, and who of our former friends, and acquaintances, have visited me. We are in Lodgings No. 7 South Florida Street, a new House with elegant accommodations, but we pay exorbitantly, indeed every thing has risen incredibly since the Winter we were here, insomuch that without the greatest economy, we cannot live on our Pay

We have a number of Lodgers, too many indeed to be agreeable—I believe I did not tell you of my ven contre with Billy Walton—the Day of our arrival here, upon our alighting and opening the Door, I hear an exclamation, and some person caught me by the hand, I removed my Veil, and beheld our old friend, who was as glad to see me as if I had been his Sister; he continued in the same house with us till he went to New York the week before last, when he desired to be particularly remember to you, Brother, Sister, Penny Mrs. D and Maria—I have since received a very sympathizing Letter from Miss Walton also, from Beulah, Susan, and Nancy Ustick—

I wrote you I had Dined at the Presidents, and how kind and attentive Mrs. Washington had been to me, She always inquires after you, and the President not only inquired after your health, but where you were, and how long you had been in Caroline—I went to the Drawing Room last Friday Evening, it was very thin, more so than I ever saw it, and no Gentlemen that I knew but Giles and Murray—did I write you that the first time I saw Giles, which was at the Presidents, he pretended he did not know me, and then turned it off with the foolish excuse "that I looked so young he took me for a visitor of Nelly's"—Venable, Gilman, Hawkins, and Grove, are the only Gentlemen <u>of our old set</u>, that have visited me. and unluckily I have not seen Grove, tho he has called twice as it was when I first came, and both times I was confined to my Bed, with the Ague and Fever. Venable is very grave, I am told he paid his addresses the whole of last session, to the youngest Miss Allen, and was repeatedly rejected by her—He inquired particularly after you, and desired to be presented to you—We drank Tea with Mr Dawson, in his Chamber, the Night before last, he is very well, and as pleasing as ever----------

What colour will you have your Satten Gown and Coat Dyed, you have omitted to inform me—The full Dress fashions have undergone very little alteration, except that

Waists are worn very short, and the Gowns pleated very far back, and made without any peak behind—in [illegible], the little hats are quite out, and a middling size introduced, which are worn almost on the back of the Head, and tyed down tight with a Beau under the chin, either of Ribband or a Gause half hand kerchief, which goes over the Crown of the Hat, and tyes down under the Chine like a Night Cap—in front there is a large rose of Ribband, pin'd, either on the morning Cap (which is tyed close over the Eyes) or on the Hair, if you do not, wear a Cap, to fill up the vacancy made by the Hats being worn so far back—you remember my Hat that was lined with blue, last Winter, I have covered it with Black and tye it down with Love, and it is quite a fashionable Hat—My beloved Sister, I have recited these little particulars, in hopes to divert your attention a moment from melancholy Reflections—Mr. Page desires to be affectionately remembered to you, and says you must excuse his not writing, for his is so hurried with Business, that he has not time to write any Body—My Books &t you may send to Norfolk, by the first safe opportunity, to the care of Mr. Herr—and such of your things as you wish to bring to Rosewell, you had better send at the same time; should the Plate be sold, I wish <u>to buy the Sugar Dish</u>, that I may have something belonging to my Family, and I pray you to make this purchase for me, and I will repay your, or answer Brother's order—Adieu! Present me to all the family, with much affections. Your's most tenderly—Margaret Page