

Nor will the monumental stone
Assuage one tear — relieve one groan.

O Washington! thy honor'd dust
To parent nature we entrust;
Convinced that your exalted mind
Still lives, but soars beyond mankind,
Still acts in virtue's sacred cause,
Nor asks from man his vain applause.

In raptures with a theme so great,
While thy famed actions they relate,
Each future age from thee shall know
All that is good and great below;
Shall glow with pride to hand thee down
To latest time, to long renown,
The brightest name on freedom's page,
And the first honor of our age.

STANZAS¹

Occasioned by certain absurd, extravagant, and even blasphemous
panegyrics and encomiums on the character of the late Gen.

Washington, that appeared in several pamphlets, journals,
and other periodical publications, in January, 1800

No tongue can tell, no pen describe
The phrenzy of a numerous tribe,
Who, by distemper'd fancy led,
Insult the memory of the dead.

Of old, there were in every age
Who stuff'd with gods the historian's page,
And raised beyond the human sphere
Some who, we know, were mortal here.

¹ From the 1815 edition.

Such was the case, we know full well,
When darkness spread her pagan spell;
Mere insects, born for tombs and graves,
They changed into celestial knaves;
Made some, condemn'd to tombs and shrouds,
Lieutenant generals in the clouds.

In journals, meant to spread the news,
From state to state — and we know whose —
We read a thousand idle things
That madness pens, or folly sings.

Was, Washington, your conquering sword
Condemn'd to such a base reward?
Was trash, like that we now review,
The tribute to your valor due?

One holds you more than mortal kind,
One holds you all ethereal mind,
This puts you in your saviour's seat,
That makes you dreadful in retreat.

One says you are become a star,
One makes you more resplendent, far;
One sings, that, when to death you bow'd,
Old mother nature shriek'd aloud.

We grieve to see such pens profane
The first of chiefs, the first of men. —
To Washington — a man — who died,
As *abba father* well applied?

Absurdly, in a frantic strain,
Why ask him not for sun and rain? —
We sicken at the vile applause
That bids him give the ocean laws.

Ye patrons of the ranting strain,
What temples have been rent in twain?

What fiery chariots have been sent
To dignify the sad event? —

O, ye profane, irreverent few,
Who reason's medium never knew:
On you she never glanced her beams;
You carry all things to extremes.

Shall they, who spring from parent earth,
Pretend to more than mortal birth?
Or, to the omnipotent allied,
Control his heaven, or join his side?

O, is there not some chosen curse,
Some vengeance due, with lightning's force
That far and wide destruction spreads,
To burst on such irreverent heads!

Had they, in life, be-praised him so,
What would have been the event, I know
He would have spurn'd them, with disdain,
Or rush'd upon them, with his cane.

He was no god, ye flattering knaves,
He own'd no world, he ruled no waves;
But — and exalt it, if you can,
He was the upright, Honest Man.

This was his glory, this outshone
Those attributes you doat upon:
On this strong ground he took his stand,
Such virtue saved a sinking land.