Coda

(She-Who-Gave-Birth-To-The-Poet, 1773)

PHILLIS was brought
from Africa to America
a small
creature spinning
in the Year 1761
my hands reaching
between seven and eight Years of Age
without any Assistance
woman but still my child
from School Education
and by only what she was taught
in the Family
and don't forget me
or this piece of land
come here
oh come back
the English language
to which she was an utter Stranger
my sweet girl
please don't leave
this stilled playground
child
child
child
to the great Astonishment
of all who heard her
touch my reaching hands
This Relation is given
by her Master
who bought her
JOHN WHEATLEY Boston
walk to my side
gentle sweet seed
Ma is calling
stay by me

—For Ms. Lucille Clifton (June 27, 1936-February 13, 2010)

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