



ROSENBACCHANAL 2020  
CELEBRATING YOUNG VOICES  
OF THE ROSENBACH  
Thursday, May 14, 6:00 p.m.



# Table of Contents

Letter from Board Chair Peter D. Nalle.....Page 1

Letter from John C. Haas Director Derick Dreher.....Page 2

Rosenbacchanal 2020 Committee.....Page 3

Thank You to Our Sponsors.....Page 4-5

Board of Directors.....Page 7

About Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate 2019-2020  
Mia Concepcion.....Page 8-9

*The Power of Words: Artifacts of Authorship and Activism at The Rosenbach*  
by Alex Ames Collections Engagement Manager.....Page 31-33

*Youthful Pioneers: Phillis Wheatley, Nakahama Manjiro, and the Loneliness  
of Being First* by Judith M. Guston Curator and Director of Collection.....Page 34-42

*Lord Byron: Inspiring Youthful Writers, Past and Present*  
by Elizabeth E. Fuller Librarian.....Page 43-44



## 2020 ROSENBACCHANAL

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Guests:

Well! Who among us thought that someday we might be gathering virtually for our rousing annual Rosenbacchanal. I for one could never have imagined such a thing. And yet, here we are—and all of us at The Rosenbach are delighted to have you with us at this time—and in this environment. Welcome!

The early half of 2020 has certainly been a difficult time, but throughout, we at The Rosenbach have found reasons to celebrate. We have learned to pivot quickly to online offerings for our programs and courses, and have been gratified immensely by the willingness of you all, and all our audiences, to follow us into this new terrain.

Read-Alouds, virtual exhibitions, literature courses, and especially our *Ulysses Every Day* Facebook group with over 800 members have been garnering attention and viewings beyond our expectations—and beyond the borders of Philadelphia. If you haven't already experienced at least one of these offerings please sign on—and tell a friend.

But truly, we wouldn't be where we are today without your generous support. Many thanks to the 2020 Rosenbacchanal Committee, chaired so ably by Gage Johnston and Pam Schreiber, for wrangling this event into place, and indeed to the entire Rosenbach staff for persevering and thriving in this challenging time. I want to also thank The Rittenhouse Hotel for their patience and understanding as we learned early in the spring that we would not be able to go ahead with a live program. And of course, Greg Moore at Moore Brothers Wines, our neighbor and longtime friend whose wines we enjoy at every Rosenbacchanal and which, I hope, you are enjoying at home even now.

I would like you all to join me especially in thanking our talented guest of honor, Youth Poet Laureate Mia Concepcion, who has graciously and bravely agreed to honor our Rosenbacchanal and its theme this year, "Young Voices", by performing her original work virtually in place of the live event we had all been looking forward to. My hope is that we will all be able to meet Mia "live" at an appropriate event in the fall.

And finally I would like to offer my deepest thanks, and those of all The Rosenbach staff, to you: our donors, sponsors, friends, and guests without whom we would not be able to thrive, indeed function, in these strange and unsettled times. Thank you!

Peter D. Nalle  
Chair



Dear Friends:

Thank you for joining us for our first-ever Virtual Rosenbacchanal! This event is a celebration of what makes The Rosenbach great: our community and the collection that brings us together, even when the strange times we live in are keeping us physically apart. The messages from Board members, donors, members, past speakers, volunteers, course leaders, and staff in these pages (and in the short heartfelt video I hope you'll watch) represent the best of The Rosenbach. Thank you for being part of our community and for making this past year such a success!

When we closed our doors in mid-March, we had just hosted a group visit to the New York Antiquarian Book Fair, a sold-out concert by Wes Stace, and a sold-out talk on Toni Morrison by Philadelphia Poet Laureate Trapeta Mayson—and that was all just in March. Earlier in the year, some 1,600 people crowded onto Delancey Place to celebrate Bloomsday 2019, and we welcomed over 500 visitors during two open houses shortly after. Numbers like those now seem an impossibility, but rest assured we will open our doors to you again as soon as we can safely do so.

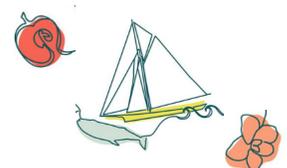
In the meantime, the public health crisis has not slowed us down. Our new webinar Sundays with *Dracula* started on May 3 (to coincide with the novel's opening chapter) and now has over 200 registrants each week. Our *Ulysses* Every Day Facebook group now numbers some 900 people, and we are posting all of the videos on our website as part of the run-up to our all digital Bloomsday on June 16. The first Behind the Bookcase digital tour was also a success in April, with over 40 people registered for a peek at our Emily Dickinson collection. We are now offering such tours monthly. Our Gallery Gateways not only make four current and past exhibitions accessible to local members sheltering in place, but also allow our far-flung friends to visit any time.

We are also serving students and their caretakers recently thrust into the role of educator by uploading lesson plans featuring Rosenbach treasures on our website. Staff and volunteer guides continue to publish their favorite stories on the Rosenblog, which is more popular than ever. Finally, community members who want to take a deeper dive into our collections now have expanded access to our catalogs, databases, and collections guides online.

I could not be more proud of all the staff has accomplished since the closure. Their creativity, adaptability, and dedication to our visitors and collections are astounding. Your words of encouragement, votes of confidence, and generous support keep us motivated and make our work possible. The Rosenbach has become a thriving institution over the last five years thanks in large part to your involvement. With your continued support, enthusiasm for our programs, and passion for the collections, I am confident that we will emerge stronger.

Thank you for all you do,

Derick Dreher  
John C. Haas Director





## Rosenbacchanal Committee

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Gage Johnston & Jack I. Jallo  
Pamela Schreiber

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2020 ROSENBACCHANAL

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# An Update on Bloomsday 2020



As we all strive to limit the impacts of COVID-19, we will be celebrating Bloomsday 2020 in a new way this year in place of our annual festival on Delancey Place. With the unique set of circumstances and challenges presented to us all over the last few months, we took the opportunity to begin observing our favorite literary holiday a bit early this year.

In mid-April we kicked off *Ulysses* Every Day, a community-led reading challenge to inspire new readers and literature enthusiasts alike to finish James Joyce's masterpiece ahead of Bloomsday on June 16, the date that *Ulysses* is set in 1904. If you haven't already, we hope you'll join the 800+ group members who have been following daily videos submitted by readers from around the world. Find *Ulysses* Every Day on our website: [rosenbach.org/ulysseseveryday](https://rosenbach.org/ulysseseveryday) and Facebook group: [Ulysses Every Day](#). This virtual crowd of literature lovers has captured so much of same spirit of The Rosenbach's annual Bloomsday festival, and we're delighted to have you be a part of it.

We have some surprises and special content in store for Bloomsday, so be sure to tune in throughout the day on Tuesday, June 16. Find us on our website and on social media as we celebrate Bloomsday 2020 in a new digital format. Stay tuned as more details will be announced in the coming weeks!

Additionally, we're excited to sponsor a contest for artwork inspired by James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Contest winners will receive a cash prize, and their artwork will be featured as part of The Rosenbach's virtual Bloomsday.

**#BloomsdayAtTheRosenbach**



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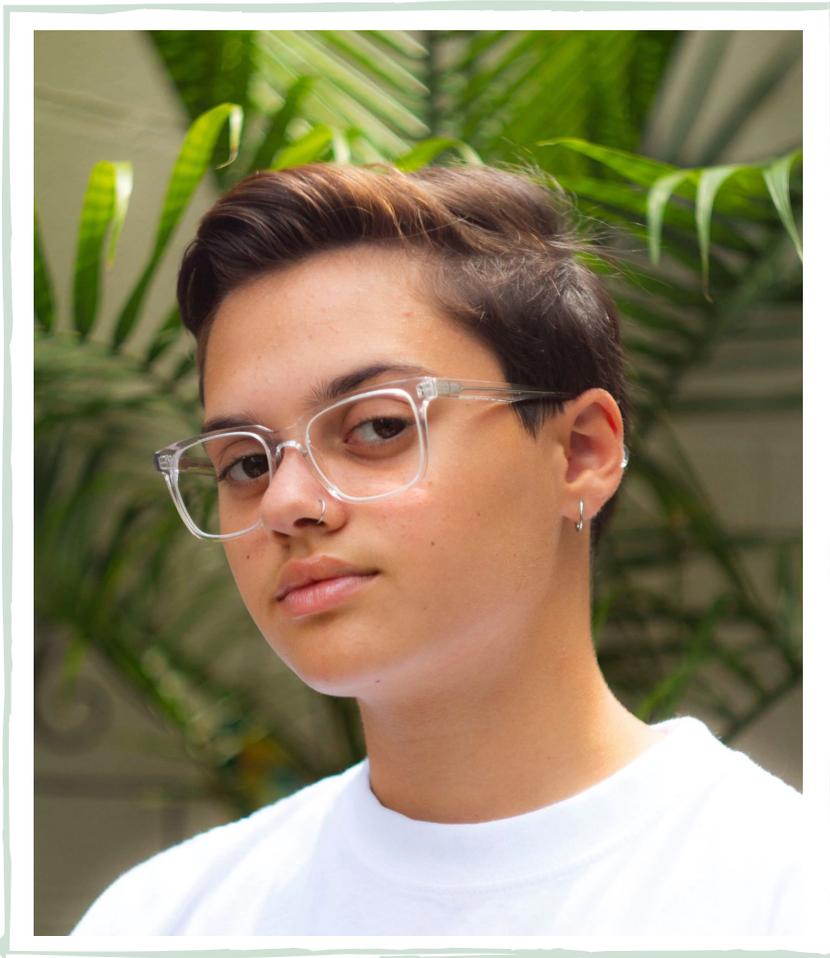
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*\*Denotes prior Board Chair*



# About Mia Concepcion

By Andrew Nurkin

Deputy Director,  
Division of Cultural and Civic Engagement  
*Free Library of Philadelphia*

*I'll let constellations form and fall off this tongue  
Mold planets out of clay with these hands,  
Create a whole universe behind these eyes  
I'll spread myself across the sky in thick, bright strokes, and leave a trail of light behind me,  
Don't you know I'm a shooting star?*

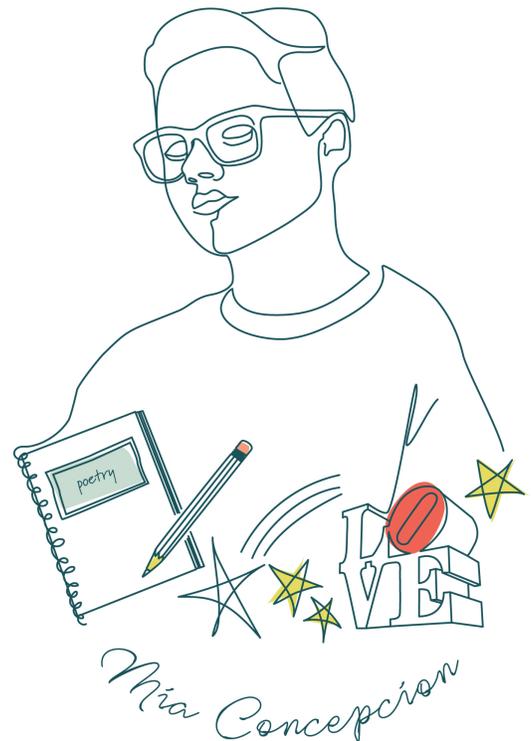
**- Mia Concepcion, 2019-2020 Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate**

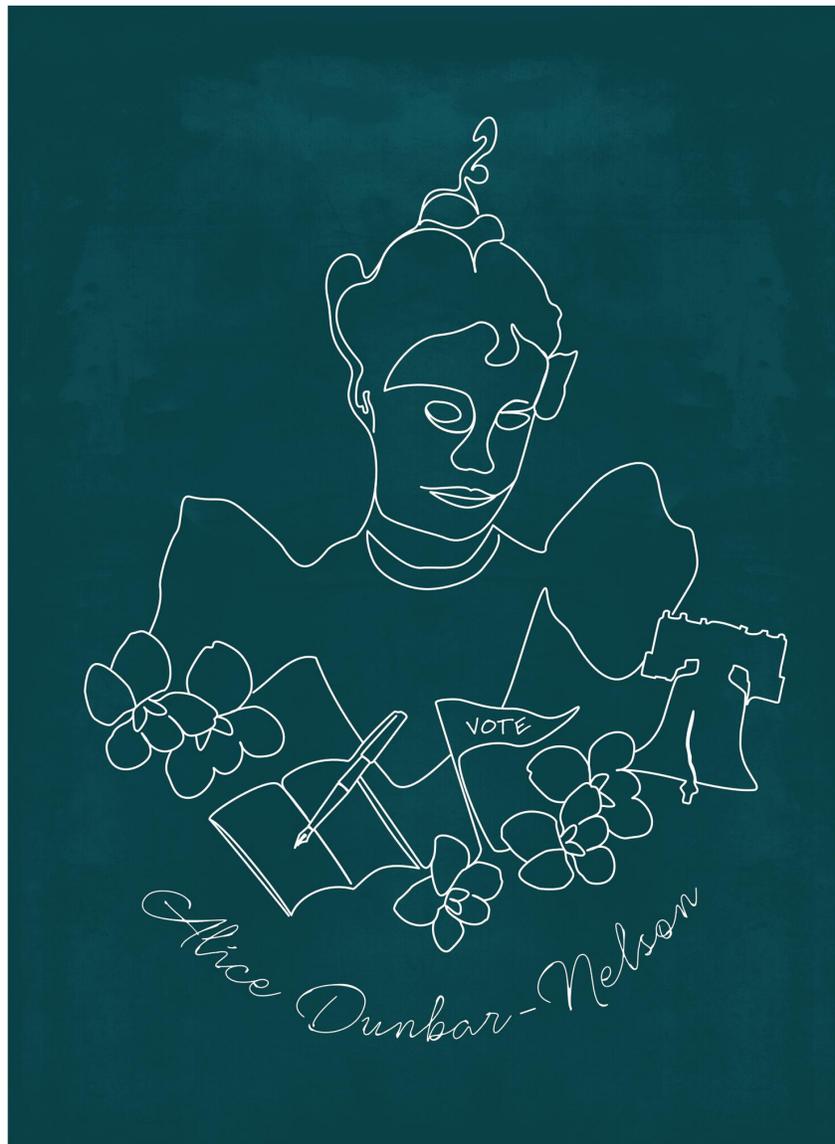
We here at the Free Library of Philadelphia are thrilled to announce that Mia Concepcion was named the 2019-2020 Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate! The formal announcement was made at a press conference with Mayor Jim Kenney and Siobhan Reardon, President and Director of the Free Library, on September 4, 2019 at Parkway Central Library. Mia is a senior at the Science Leadership Academy. She was born and raised in South Philadelphia and has been an active part of the city's youth poetry slam scene for several years. During her one-year tenure as Youth Poet Laureate, Mia will be an ambassador for poetry around the city through readings and workshops. The laureateship is also a civic role, and through her Youth Poet Laureate project Mia will assemble an anthology of poetry written by Philadelphia's young people.

## About Mia Concepcion Cont.

As Youth Poet Laureate, Mia will receive an educational scholarship and work closely with the 2018-2020 Philadelphia Poet Laureate Raquel Salas Rivera. Of Mia's work, Raquel writes: "Mia Concepcion's work delves fearlessly into the painful complexities of existing in more than one world. Her poetry stood out for its willingness to be both confrontational and tender. She has a nuanced understanding of how different parts of Philadelphia come together and deftly navigates race, gender, and sexuality. The projects she has in mind for the city are insightful and I am confident she will bring much to the city during her term." Mia joins a line of exceptionally talented writers who have served as Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate. The 2018-19 Youth Poet Laureate, Wes Matthews, organized a series of workshops for young writers led by some of Philadelphia's most well-known poets. Husnaa Hashim, who was the 2017-2018 Youth Poet Laureate, published her first chapbook, *Honey Sequence*, during her laureate year and was recently featured in the *Kenyon Review Online*. The 2016-2017 laureate, Otter Jung-Allen, edited an anthology of young poets from along the East Coast.

The Free Library has managed the Philadelphia Poet Laureate program since 2017. The program is housed in the Free Library's Division of Cultural and Civic Engagement and guided by a governing committee comprised of poets, educators, and arts-organization professionals from around the city. Both the Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate are civic positions that recognize exceptional poets who also demonstrate commitments to the power of poetry to engage and inspire people throughout Philadelphia's neighborhoods. For more information about the Philadelphia Poet Laureate program, please visit [www.freelibrary.org/poetlaureate](http://www.freelibrary.org/poetlaureate).





## Pamela Schreiber

So proud and happy to support The Rosenbach, a unique and special gem we are lucky to have enriching our cultural lives in Philadelphia. Join us!

# *the* Delancey Society



## **Supporting The Rosenbach throughout the year**

Join and enjoy exclusive benefits including:

- Exhibition opening receptions
- Curated tour of The New York Antiquarian Book Fair every March
- Delancey Society Travels opportunities
- Rosenbach Salons with authors and speakers

For more information about The Delancey Society and to join, please contact Director of Development Kelsey Bates at (215) 732-1600 ext. 122 or [kbates@rosenbach.org](mailto:kbates@rosenbach.org)

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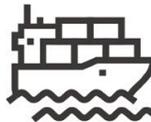
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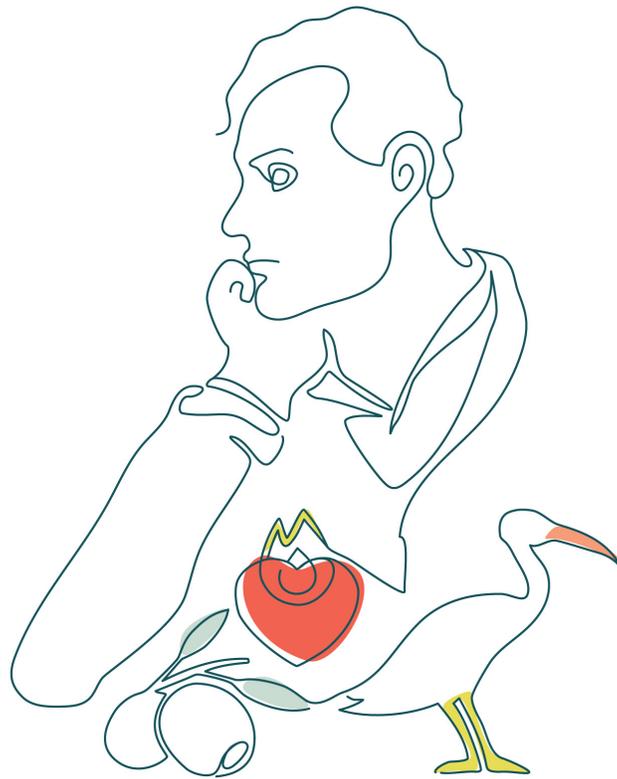
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*Lord Byron*

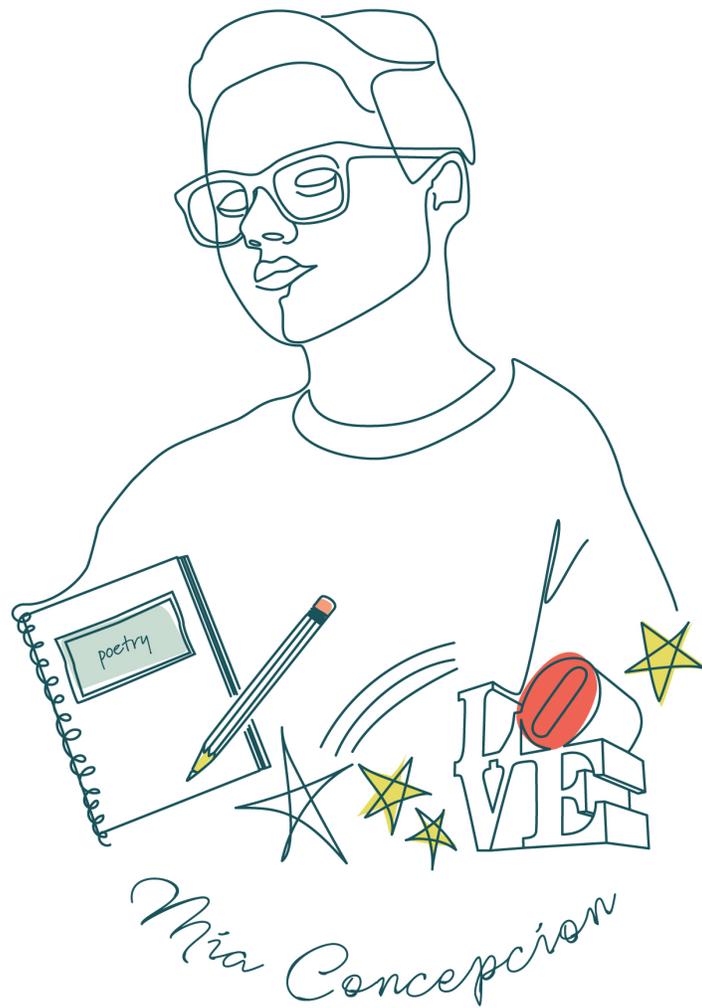
A salute to the Staff for finding new and creative ways to share a peerless collection and deliver imaginative programming.

**-Arthur Spector**



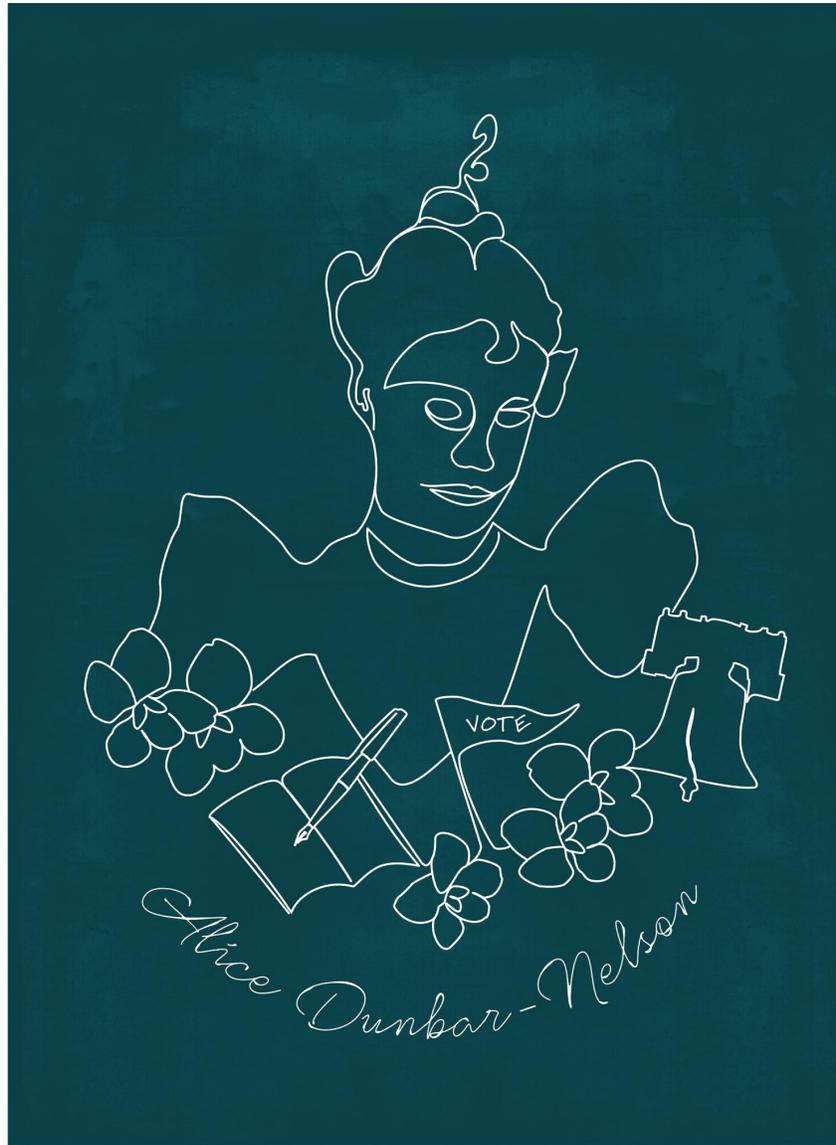
## Eileen Kennedy and Robert C. Heim

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Congratulations for another year of  
programs, conversations, and literature!



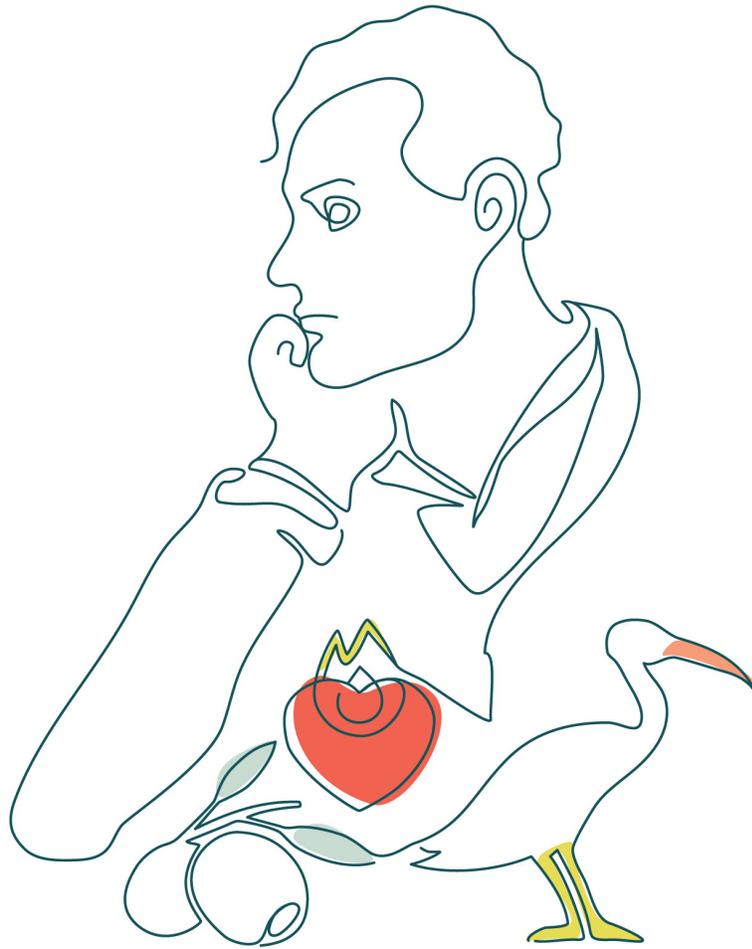
## Amy and R. Putnam Coes, III

Congratulations to the Rosenbacchanal Committee and staff for joining hands in these uncertain times to produce what is sure to be yet another amazing Rosenbacchanal!



## Gene and Debbie LeFevre

are very proud to support  
The Rosenbach!



*Lord Byron*

A toast to The Rosenbach and to the  
good health of all!

**-Lenni Steiner and Perry Lerner**

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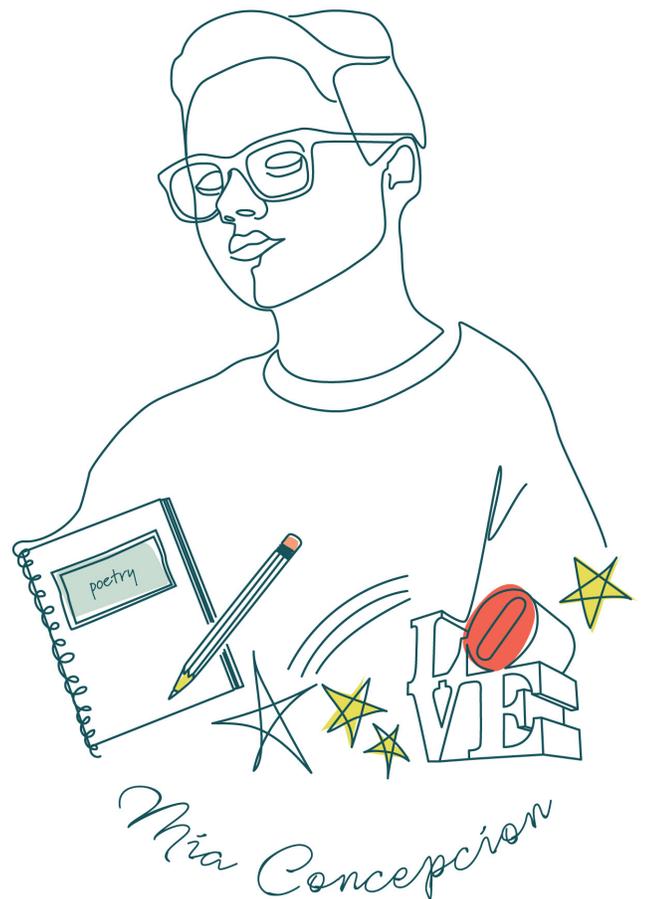
## Genie and Jim Murphy

are grateful to our Rosenbach family for being the locus of literary discovery and sharing that has so enriched our lives here in Philadelphia.

THE ROSENBACH

## Cynthia and John Affleck

congratulate the staff and Rosenbacchanal Committee for another special event, made even more so during these times. Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!



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# The Rosenbach is Going Virtual!

Click to read more about these innovative online programs  
and register today!

[Gallery Gateways](#)



[Virtual Behind the Bookcase](#)

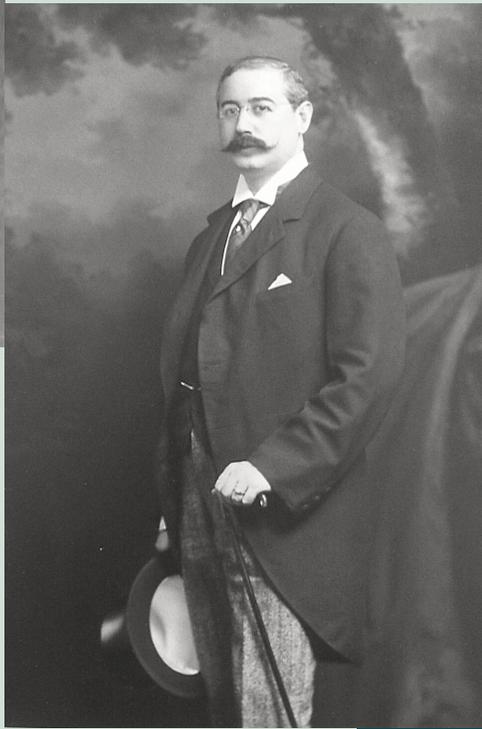
[Sundays with Dracula](#)

[Free Shakespeare Read-Aloud Group](#)

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Left: Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach



Right: Philip Rosenbach

# Renée Sackey

is proud to support The Rosenbach Museum and Library and its family legacy.

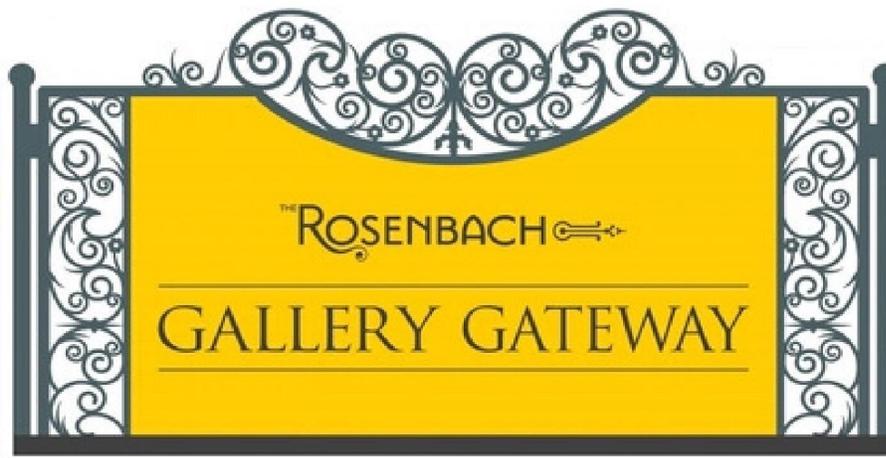
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We re-Joyce in the existence of The Rosenbach and its role in enriching the intellectual life of our Philadelphia community!

**-Peter A. Benoliel and Willo Carey**



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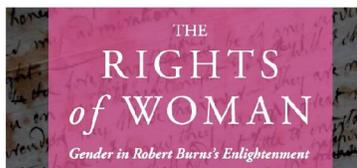
The Rosenbach has unveiled a new Gallery Gateway online exhibitions portal that will make content from exhibitions mounted onsite at the museum available to all via the Internet.



American Voyager: Herman Melville at 200



Manjiro: Drifting, 1841-2020



The Rights of Woman:  
Gender in Robert Burns's Enlightenment



Out of Many, One:  
Diversity and the American Experiment

A “Gallery Gateway” is a cross between traditional, printed museum exhibition catalogues and web-based virtual exhibitions, which have become popular in recent years. They are optimized to present the types of artifacts most often showcased in Rosenbach exhibitions: rare books, manuscripts, documents, and other text-based objects, in addition to flat works of art and three-dimensional artifacts.





No matter where we are, it is a  
pleasure to celebrate the  
Rosenbachchanal together! Cheers!

**Winston and Carol Banford**

THE ROSENBACH

Through stormy seas  
The Rosenbach sails, eyes on the  
horizon. Bravo!

**Ellie and Peter Nalle**

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## Virtual Behind the Bookcase

Our Behind the Bookcase tours are going digital! Get a behind-the-scenes peek at some of the rare and important objects in our collection and get the chance to talk directly with our experts during these virtual sessions.

These virtual Behind the Bookcase tours will be scheduled on the last Thursday of the month at 12:30 p.m. This interactive program will be held on Zoom. Be sure to register in advance to receive email instructions ahead of the meeting time.



### **20th Century Gay and Lesbian Lives**

Ahead of Pride Month in June, this program will examine the hidden histories of 20th century queer luminaries through published and private writings.

May 28, 2020  
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm



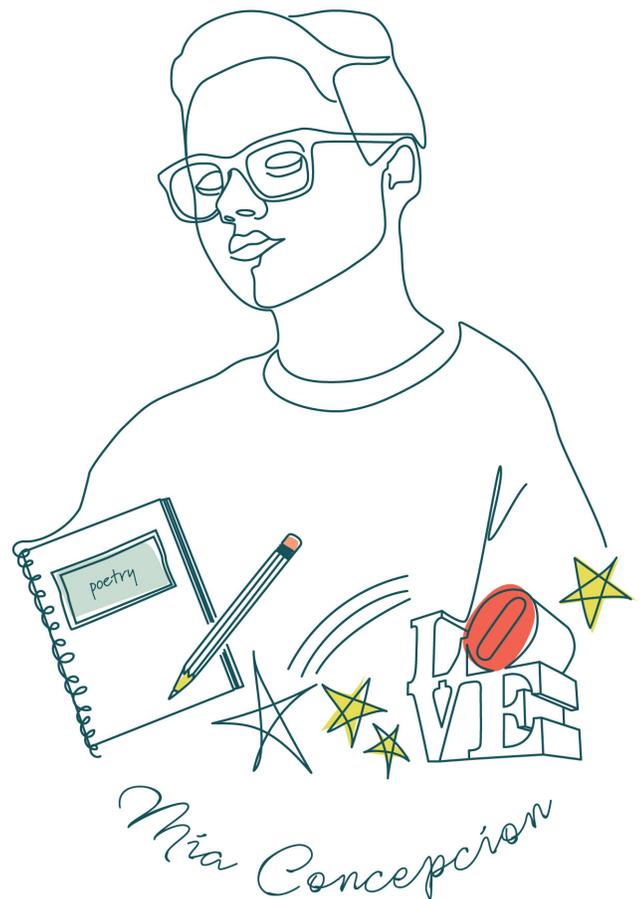
## Jacqueline and Eric Kraeutler

are proud to support  
The Rosenbach. We are looking  
forward to the bright future  
ahead with more great  
programs and celebrations!

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## Barbara and Fred Sutherland

are proud to support The  
Rosenbach, its staff, and the  
community that makes this museum  
and library so special!



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# Free Shakespeare Read-Aloud Group

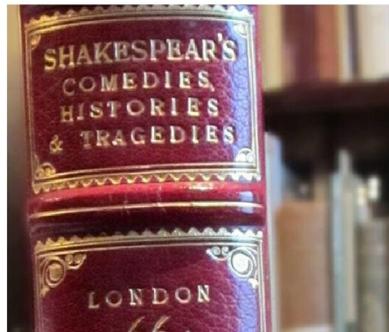
The Shakespeare Read-Aloud is moving online! We'll be hosting the reading on Zoom in the coming weeks while The Rosenbach is closed to the public. Be sure to register to receive email instructions ahead of the meeting time.

Much Ado About Nothing  
May 23, 2020

Twelfth Night  
June 6, 2020

Midsummer Night's Dream  
June 27, 2020

Henry VI Part One  
July 11, 2020



Henry VI Part Two  
July 25, 2020

Henry VI Part Three  
August 8, 2020

Pericles  
August 22, 2020

Reading Shakespeare's plays aloud offers not only a communal way to enjoy these great works but also promotes a deeper understanding of their poetry and wordplay. No acting experience is required to participate —just bring your voice and a copy of the play!

1:00 pm - 4:30 pm



## Lisa Washington

is a proud supporter of the Rosenbacchanal. Many thanks to the Rosenbacchanal Committee and staff for bringing us another fantastic event!

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## Drs. Vivian and Mark Greenberg

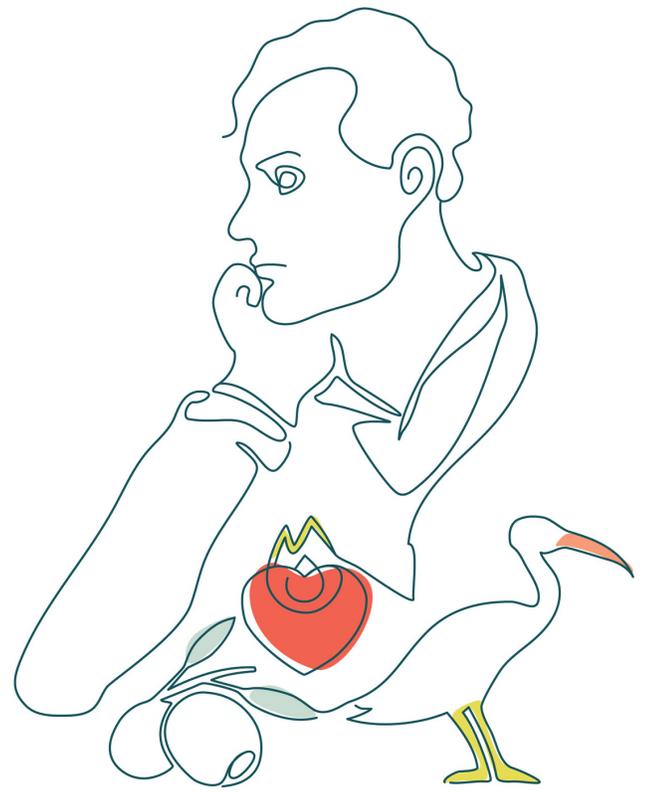
look forward to enjoying The Rosenbach in all its glory very soon. Thanks to the superb staff for keeping it going.

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## Amy Finkel and Richard Braemer

Congratulations to The Rosenbach and all who ensured a continued successful event!



*Lord Byron*

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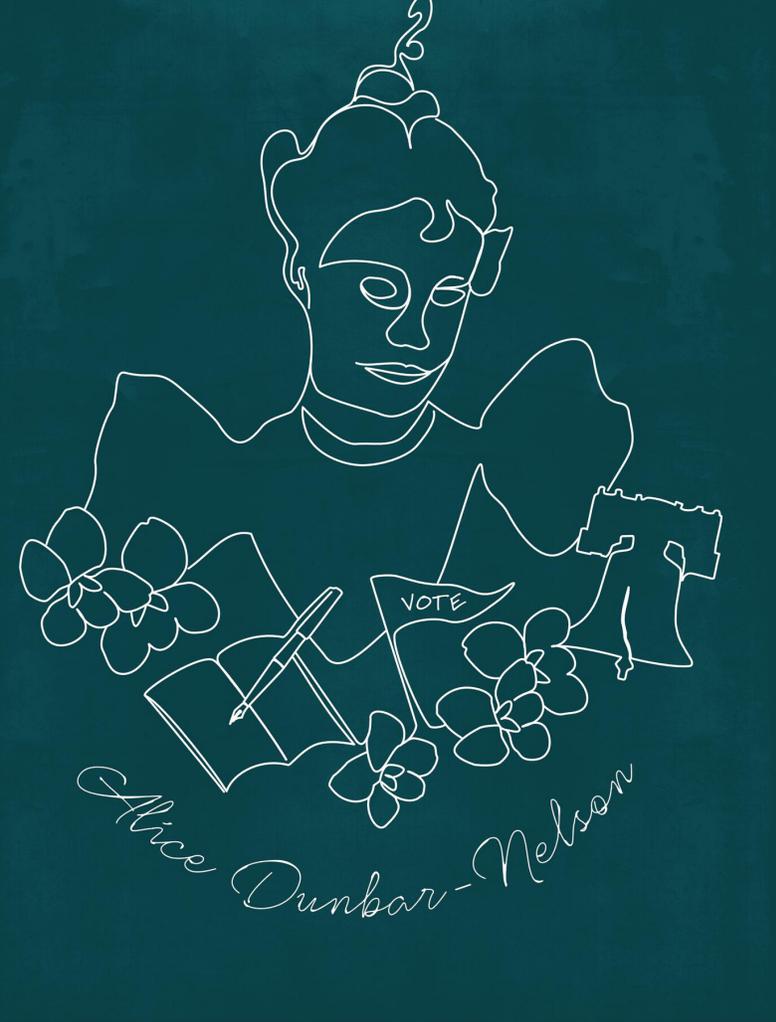


*Phillis Wheatley*

## Drs. Vivian and Mark Greenberg

look forward to enjoying The Rosenbach in all its glory very soon. Thanks to the superb staff for keeping it going.

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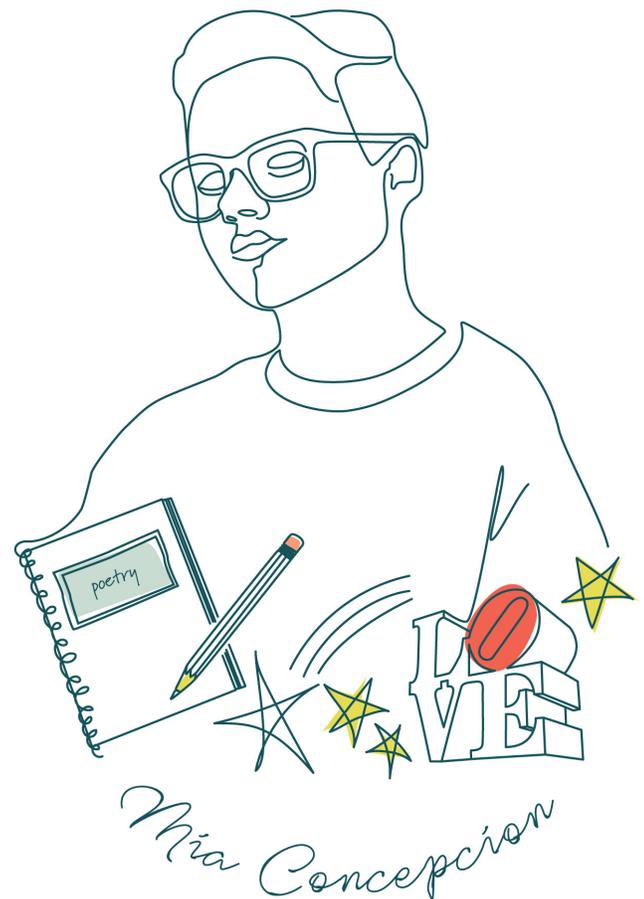
## Elizabeth H. Gemmill

A toast to The Rosenbach community! You are what makes this museum and library so special

THE ROSENBACH

## Betsy W. & David H. Wice

Congratulations to The Rosenbach for another wonderful year!



THE ROSENBACH

## Become a Member!

The Rosenbach is so much more than a physical place. Our community of members, their dedication, interest, and passion for this institution are truly what make The Rosenbach a unique place. You can access the thoughtful correspondence of Abigail and John Adams, the poetic words of Phillis Wheatley, the wordplay of James Joyce, or the thrill of *Dracula* through The Rosenbach's website and on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. In fact, we have an ever-increasing number of online resources available, made possible in no small part by the generous support of you and other members. Thank you!



Not a member? Join today! Here are some benefit highlights to be enjoyed once we open again:

- The Abigail Adams level is perfect for families, offering unlimited admission for two adults and all children under the age of 18. Plus, get our special-edition Rosentote.
- The Phillis Wheatley level gives you access to over 1,000 museums and cultural institutions across the United States through the North American Reciprocal Museum Association.
- At the Miguel de Cervantes level, members receive two complimentary tickets to Bibliococktails, our literary-themed cocktail parties.
- The Charlotte Brontë level offers a special invitation to a Delancey Society Salon, where you will have the opportunity to meet an In Conversation With The Rosenbach speaker.



## Tobey and Mark Dichter

cherish the Rosenbach - a GEM of the city! (proudly in the crown of the Free Library of Philadelphia)

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## Melissa Greenberg and Peter Badgio

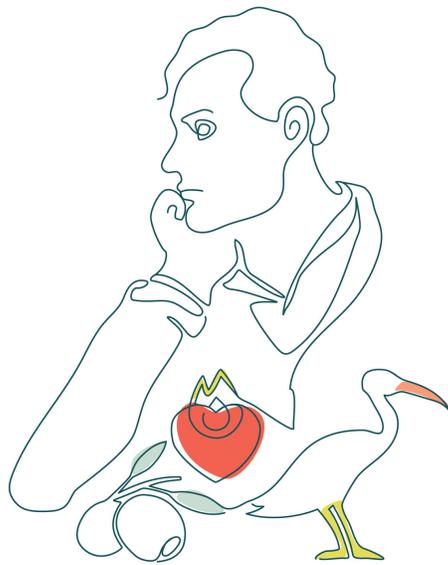
are delighted to support The Rosenbach's creative programming and peerless collection. Congratulations on a terrific year, and happy Rosenbacchanal!

THE ROSENBACH





# Celebrating Young Voices of The Rosenbach



Lord Byron

This year, our guests are coming together for the Virtual Rosenbacchanal 2020: Young Voices of The Rosenbach, with the Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate Mia Concepcion from home. Thank you for being with us!

Tonight, we honor nearly three centuries of contributions from young writers, poets, and artists who transformed society through their passion and vision, and whose works are found in The Rosenbach collection today. Delve into the fascinating histories of the young people who inspired our sponsorship levels: Phillis Wheatley, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Celia and Marion Moss, Nakahama "John" Manjiro, and Lord Byron with the following insights from our collections staff.



Phillis Wheatley

# The Power of Words: Artifacts of Authorship and Activism at The Rosenbach

Alex L. Ames

Collections Engagement Manager, The Rosenbach

How sweet in our youth of the future to think,  
While the sun-beams of health round us play;  
And at the pure fountain of fancy to drink,  
While hope gilds them o'er with her ray.

Celia and Marion Moss, "Hope," *Early Efforts*, 1839

Words have power. They can even change the world.

The bookshelves, exhibition galleries, program spaces, and reading room of The Rosenbach are filled with artifacts of the power of the written word to shape the course of history. Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach sought books and manuscripts of global importance for his collection, meaning that our library's holdings continue to impress and inspire. Some objects reveal how young people wielded pen, ink, and printing press to advocate for the causes in which they believed. The lives and works of three youthful authors—Celia Moss, Marion Moss, and Alice Dunbar-Nelson—offer lessons for us today. An important thread unites the legacies of these three women: the lasting power of authorship and education to inspire social change.

Born into a large Jewish family in Portsmouth, England, Celia Moss Levetus (1819-1873) and her sister Marion Moss (1821-1907) grew up in a household that valued education. When young, the sisters composed poetry, publishing *Early Efforts, a Volume of Poems, by the Misses Moss of the Hebrew Nation, Aged 18 and 16* in 1839. They went on to author *The Romance of Jewish History* in 1840 and *Tales of Jewish History* in 1843, both of which were efforts to present Jewish culture in a favorable light to suspicious Victorian society. The sisters moved to London in 1840, where they taught and eventually opened a school for Jewish children. They are important early figures in Jewish education, activism, and literary life in modern Britain.

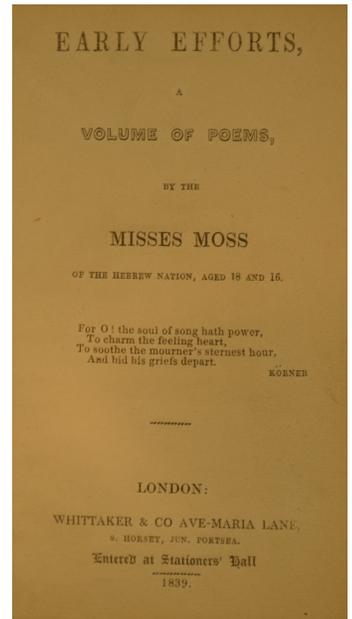


Celia Moss Levetus and Marion Moss, *Early Efforts: A Volume of Poems, by the Misses Moss, of the Hebrew Nation, Aged 18 and 16* (London: Whittaker & Co., 1839), Rosenbach Call No. J 839I.



Celia Moss Levetus and Marion Moss, *Early Efforts: A Volume of Poems, by the Misses Moss, of the Hebrew Nation, Aged 18 and 16* (London: Whittaker & Co., 1839), Rosenbach Call No. J 839I.

The Moss sisters hold a place of significance in the history of The Rosenbach because of a wonderful artifact in our holdings. Dr. Rosenbach had visited the Royal Library at Windsor Castle in 1924. Knowing of his interest in Judaica, the Royal Librarian showed Dr. Rosenbach a copy of the Moss Sisters' book *Early Efforts*. The specially-bound volume included the arms of the British Sovereign embroidered on velvet; a dedication on the back cover notes that the ornate book is "The Jewish Maidens' Tribute." Never shy when rare books were concerned, Dr. Rosenbach expressed interest in the volume. Shortly after his visit, he received the book as a gift, with the compliments of the Royal Library.



Celia Moss Levetus and Marion Moss, *Early Efforts: A Volume of Poems, by the Misses Moss, of the Hebrew Nation, Aged 18 and 16* (London: Whittaker & Co., 1839), Rosenbach Call No. J 839I

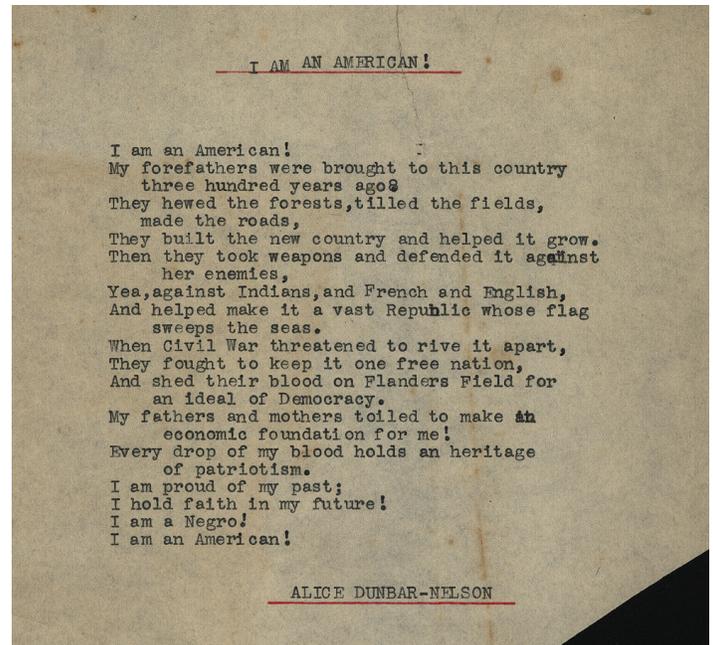


Addison Scurlock (1883-1964), photograph of Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Washington, D.C., 1915. Courtesy of University of Delaware Library, Museums, and Press, Special Collections & Museums Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers, MSS 113.27.459.

Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1875-1935) grew up in a different era, a different nation, and with a different set of social, economic, and political challenges than the Moss sisters. Yet her literary productions and achievements as a political figure reflect many of the same themes of those of the Moss sisters, namely an effort to incorporate previously-unheralded stories into broader cultural understandings and, through these means, to bring about a more just and tolerant society. Like the Moss sisters, Alice Dunbar-Nelson combined her work as a teacher with creative writing and historical research, showcasing the importance of African Americans' achievements to the broader narrative of U.S. history and culture. A native of New Orleans who later resided in Wilmington, Delaware, and Philadelphia, Dunbar-Nelson also enjoyed a prestigious career in secondary and post-secondary education, helped lead the Women's Suffrage Movement, and engaged in party politics.

Dunbar-Nelson's legacy demands reexamination as an example of commitment to social justice and intellectual growth to which we all should aspire. She will form the focus of The Rosenbach's fall exhibition "*I Am an American!*": *The Authorship and Activism of Alice Dunbar-Nelson*, a collaborative partnership with the University of Delaware Library, which holds most of Dunbar-Nelson's personal papers. The name of the exhibition is inspired by a poem that Dunbar-Nelson wrote ca. 1919, pictured here, in which she claims civic space for African Americans.

The Rosenbach celebrates the legacies of authors, educators, and agents of social change like the Moss sisters and Alice Dunbar-Nelson. Please participate in our programs, attend our tours, and visit our reading room to discover these and many more inspirational figures from our past who speak so profoundly to our present and future.



Alice Dunbar-Nelson, typescript, "I Am an American!", ca. 1919. Courtesy of University of Delaware Library, Museums, and Press, Special Collections & Museums, Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers, MSS 113.27.459.



"*I Am an American!*" consulting curators Monet Timmons and Jesse Erickson, both of the University of Delaware, with Rosenbach Collections Department and exhibition design staff, viewing items from the Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers at the University of Delaware Library in preparation for the exhibition, February 13, 2020.

## Youthful Pioneers: Phillis Wheatley, Nakahama Manjiro, and the Loneliness of Being First

**Judith M. Guston**

**Curator and Director of Collections, The Rosenbach**

Every time we convene a Founding Fathers Hands-on Tour in the West Library of the Rosenbach—where the Americana collections reside—we discuss what our founders may have thought they wanted to do with their lives when they were young. We generally conclude that none likely grew up thinking, “I want to found a nation.” As we look at original manuscripts written by some of them during their late teens and early twenties, we see them not yet touched by the events that soon would change their lives and establish their lasting legacies. And yet, they have been linked together over time by remarkable historical events. Centuries later, we look back at them as a group, knowing that they walked into what lay ahead with some degree of preparedness, companionship, and organization.

Elsewhere in the Americana collection, two objects stand out because they represent individuals who were just children when momentous events made them who they would become. Neither had the ability to turn back. Neither had been prepared in any way to face the futures that lay ahead. Yet, as powerless as they may have felt in the moments their destinies changed, both forged their legacies through resilience, intelligence, and curiosity. Today, we celebrate their achievements and acknowledge the hardships they both faced:

- Phillis Wheatley (ca. 1754-1784), sold into slavery from West Africa when she was just 7 years old, became the first published African American woman poet when her book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, was printed in London in 1773.
- Nakahama Manjiro (1827-1898), at 14, was on a small boat with four companions off the coast of southern Japan when a storm blew them out to sea. Rescued by an American whaling ship—and unable to return home due to Japanese law—he became the first Japanese person to live in the United States. After living and working in the U.S. and aboard ships for a decade, he returned to Japan just before the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry. Although his social class was not typical of diplomats, Manjiro was instrumental in the dialogue that changed the course of his country's history and, as a result, that of the world.

## Phillis Wheatley: *I'll snatch a laurel..*

Phillis Wheatley was born in the area of West Africa now known as Senegambia, taken by force, and brought to colonial Boston when she was only 7. John Wheatley, a wealthy tailor and merchant, purchased her to work for his wife, Susannah. While it is believed that Phillis was named after the ship *Phillis* on which she was transported to America, it is not recorded whether she was ever asked her given name or remembered it later on, although interpretations of one of her early memories expressed in poetry suggest that she may have been born into a Muslim family.

It is reported that Phillis announced her desire to write when she removed a piece of charcoal from the fireplace and used it to write on a wall. We are told that Susannah, excited by Phillis's initiative, taught her to read and write English, Latin, and possibly Greek. Even women of Susannah's station, however, generally didn't receive a classical education. Is it possible that male members of the family, or even neighbors, may have been involved in teaching Phillis? She developed close associations with local clergy; did some of her studies take place in church libraries?

Phillis's early promise in composing poetry led to her initial publication in the *Newport Mercury* newspaper in 1767. In 1773, Susannah, who was ill at the time, sent Phillis to London to find a publisher for her poems, as an American publisher could not be found. There, Phillis met the Countess of Huntingdon, with whom she'd had a previous correspondence through church connections. She backed the publication financially and saw to the creation of the frontispiece (see below), making Phillis the first African published in the English language and the second American woman to publish a book. Phillis's abilities were initially received with skepticism; the publisher insisted on including a statement by a group of 18 notable, white, male Bostonians who, after examination of her, acknowledged her authorship.

Phillis made arrangements to generate subscriptions for the original printing of her book, which she signed to distinguish them from any later printings. She would receive half of the subscription income and urged her friends to help encourage subscribers to increase her take. She actively discouraged reprinting the book in New Haven lest an American edition diminish the economic benefit to her from British sales. It's not known how much income she realized from her sales, but she intended to use these funds to support herself during the new-found freedom her trip would help her realize.

Phillis's poems speak to her intellect, learnedness, and engagement with the artistic and political community around her. She reflected on such great authors as Horace, the Roman lyric poet, to whose tribute to his own patron, *Ad Maecenam*, she creates an homage in her first poem, *To Maecenas*, and Terence, the Roman comic playwright and enslaved African, whom she noted as her literary ancestor in the same poem. She revealed her deep biblical knowledge, imagining herself as David battling Goliath in a metaphoric fight for freedom. She graced many with her generous epitaphs and encomia. Through the publication of her book, she gained recognition at home and abroad and created a lasting challenge to stereotypes about race, sex, education, and humanity itself.

In our Castaways Behind the Bookcase Hands-on Tour at The Rosenbach, we discuss Phillis's public image as she left London for home. Her visual image above, the traditions it reflected, and the cultures it confronted is one topic. We note too, that the playwright Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), also represented in our collections, then fresh off the premiere of *She Stoops to Conquer*, wrote to a newspaper commenting on Phillis's London visit. To our modern sensibilities his letter is painful to read for its misogyny and blatant racism, and for its repetition of an implied sexual slur made by centuries of male writers before him. But his underlying complaint is clear: women poets—and particularly those who look like Phillis—have no business writing. We should be clear-eyed about how uneven the embrace was for Phillis and what she represented—and how strong she needed to be.

Keeping her eyes on her goals, Phillis used her trip to London to create an opportunity to leverage her freedom at home. In 1774, after Phillis's return and shortly before Susannah's death, the Wheatleys freed her, yet, with little means of real support, she would remain in John's home until his death in 1778.



Frontispiece. Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. London: Printed for A. Bell, Bookseller, Aldgate; and sold by Messrs. Cox and Berry, King-Street, Boston, 1773. A 773p

There remain letters and public writings from the period following her freedom in which Phillis comments on the institution of slavery, such as this excerpt from a letter (later published) to the Reverend Samson Occom, a Mohegan pastor from Connecticut she'd come to know from his visit to Boston when she was in her early teens:

*Otherwise, perhaps, the Israelites had been less solicitous for their Freedom from Egyptian Slavery: I don't say they would have been contented without it, by no Means, for in every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance; and by the Leave of our modern Egyptians I will assert that the same Principle lives in us.*

Phillis Wheatley, *Letter to Reverend Samson Occom*, 1774

After John Wheatley's death, she married a free black man, John Peters. They struggled with poverty and the loss of several children. Phillis published additional poetry and her book did eventually see an American edition, but, despite her enormous accomplishments, she died ill and poor at age 30.

In the first poem in her book, *To Mæcenæ*, Phillis whimsically announced her ambition as a poet to her imagined patron:

*I'll snatch a laurel from thine honour'd head, While you indulgent smile upon the deed.*

...

*Then grant, Mæcenæ, thy paternal rays, Hear me propitious, and defend my lays.*

Her life was difficult and too brief. Today, her book lives on library shelves like those at The Rosenbach amidst the many works of those she admired and those who later admired her—and alongside the works of those of her time who appreciated her, such as Benjamin Franklin, and those who did not, like Goldsmith and Jefferson. It appears that her laurel was well earned.

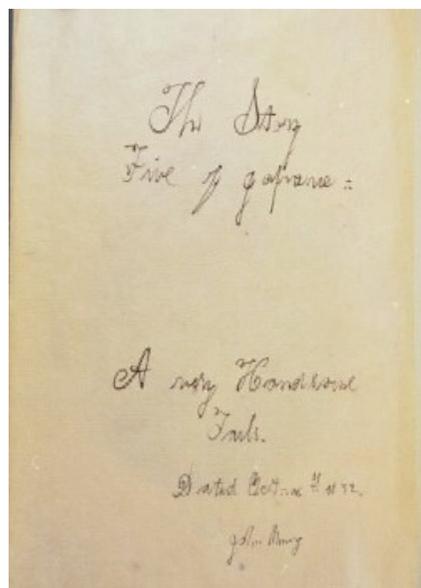
For more information on Phillis Wheatley, read this book: Vincent Caretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2014.

## Nakahama Manjiro: ... good will come out of this changing world ...

Just as we saw in Phillis Wheatley's story, Manjiro's date with destiny began with an unintended sea voyage. Manjiro was 14 in 1841 when he and four companions were swept away by a storm while fishing off the coast of southeast Japan. This incident, his rescue, and the experiences he had over the next 10 years would change him forever and help to shape the history of the world.

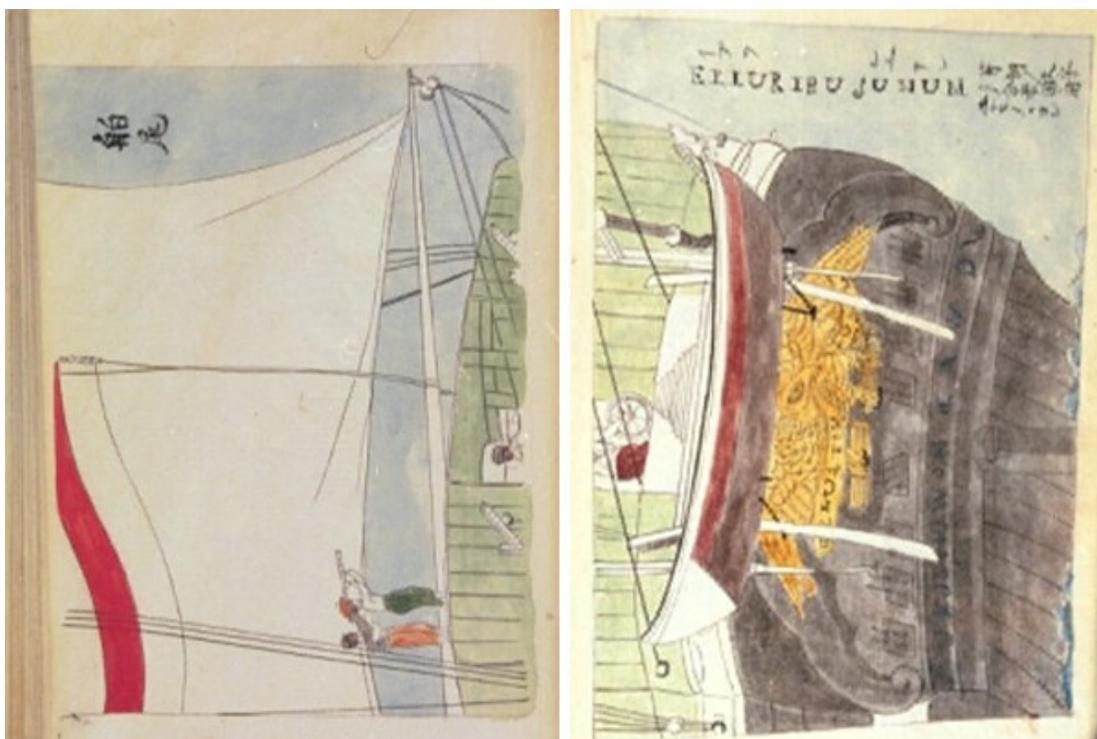
The Rosenbach holds Manjiro's personal copy of the manuscript that records his tale of this decade of travel and discovery in the United States and around the world. His return to Japan on the eve of Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival made Manjiro useful to Japanese authorities, who sent a government official and artist, Kawada Shoryo, to interrogate him. Together, they created an illustrated manuscript, copies of which were sent to government authorities. Shoryo made a copy for himself, which has recently been discovered in Japan.

You can learn about Manjiro's adventures in The Rosenbach's manuscript and flip through the illustrated pages of the recently discovered Shoryo manuscript and another historic copy in *Manjiro: Drifting, 1841-2020*, one of The Rosenbach's Gallery Gateway online exhibitions at [rosenbach.org/gallery-gateway](http://rosenbach.org/gallery-gateway). This essay will give you some additional insights beyond those offered in the exhibition that pertain to Manjiro's roles as both John Mung (his name as an American sailor and laborer) and Nakahama Manjiro (his name as an honored Japanese returnee).



Cover of Volume One (left) and Manjiro's title page (right) from Nakahama Manjiro (1827-1898), [Hyoson kiriyaku]. The story five of Japanese: a very handsome taile [sic]: manuscript, 1852 October 25. AMs 1296/14

Five months after Manjiro's initial shipwreck on a deserted island, he and his companions were rescued by an American whaling ship whose crew searched there for food, as they had no available ports of call that close to Japan. The castaways also had nowhere to go: Japanese law forbade them to return, as distrust of the outside world and the potential cultural consequences of contact had made Japan a closed nation for over 200 years.



*E Pluribus Unum (The Howland)* from Nakahama Manjiro (1827-1898), [Hyoson kiryaku]. The story five of Japanese: a very handsome taile [sic]: manuscript, 1852 October 25. AMs 1296/14

With his older companions safely deposited in Oahu, Manjiro continued on to Fairhaven, Massachusetts (across the bay from New Bedford), with the whaling ship's captain, William H. Whitfield. His arrival made him the first Japanese person to live in the United States. And it was from there that his adventure began. Again, The Rosenbach's Gallery Gateway gives a thorough view of Manjiro's story.

Throughout his story we see a keen and clear observer of the human condition, of social and economic interactions between individuals, in business, and between states, and an intensely ethical actor in every encounter he has. If these are the natural skills for diplomacy, his transition from subsistence fishing to the world stage couldn't have been more serendipitous.



New Bedford Harbor from  
Nakahama Manjiro (1827-1898),  
[Hyoson kiryaku]. The story five of Japanese: a  
very handsome taile [sic]: manuscript, 1852  
October 25. AMs 1296/14

The manuscript reflects calm, dispassionate reporting, whether on the domestic front on the loss of Captain Whitfield's young child, whom Manjiro clearly loved, having described him as having a face "as lovely as a polished jewel," or in his role as an international traveler on his companions' reports to him about the Pacific islands visited by some American ships, where the people wore no clothes, lived in dug-out huts in the ground, and women were traded with sailors in an exchange of sex for tobacco. While he describes the Whitfield family's grief and the sailors' denigrating behaviors towards these indigenous people, his own attitude can only be described as rational.

Much is made of Manjiro's "luck" in the California Gold Rush, where he made enough money to purchase his passage back to Japan. In fact, it wasn't luck at all, but his perceptive observation of American capitalism at work: a large company had hired an agency to deliver him as a low-wage worker.

This model would not produce the requisite savings, but if he used his wages to buy his own tools and was smart, he could keep all the money he made. The technically-inclined Manjiro made an ample amount quickly to buy his way home.

His business acumen—and his growing diplomatic intuition—were also apparent in a letter to Captain Whitfield from Guam in 1847 while on a whaling voyage. He hoped that as his ship neared Japan, he would be able to go ashore there and open a port for American whaling ships. It's unclear if Manjiro had any premonition at this point if opening Japanese ports would be a key element of the American overture to Japan four years later—and when he would play a key role in the outcome. But, the logistical need and economic benefit for both nations was clearly on his mind. But he never made it ashore at this time.

His return to Japan and his service to his country is the last part of the manuscript that Manjiro and Shoryo created together. The knowledge that Manjiro brought home with him was valuable information for the authorities who needed intelligence to inform their negotiations with the Americans who had come calling. Manjiro was given access to the highest authorities to make recommendations, despite the fears of some that he'd been corrupted by his rescue and lengthy stay in America. Manjiro criticized the isolation policy, pointing out the cruel treatment of those who had arrived on Japan's shores in emergencies, and suggested opening several ports to American whaling ships, just as he had wished to do several years earlier. For his assistance, the lower-level samurai status he'd received on his initial arrival and interrogation was increased and he was permitted to take on a surname—Nakahama—based on his home village. Once the ports were open, Manjiro was appointed the head of Japan's fledgling whaling enterprise, as well as teaching English and navigation.

Throughout Manjiro's travels, whether at home in Massachusetts, or at sea with his shipmates, Manjiro was deeply loyal. Despite being separated from his friends in Oahu early in his journey, he continued to visit them as he made port there. Even after his return to Japan, he continued to maintain contact with friends, particularly Captain Whitfield, whom he called "fatherly" and "my best friend on earth beside the great God."

In a letter to Captain Whitfield, Manjiro noted his difficulty writing from on board the Japanese ship, on which he served as a translator, that there were "... so many Japanese eyes, I can't ...." His unease was warranted, as there were threats on his life due to his internationalist political views; he had to have a bodyguard for protection. Although he was made a samurai under the Shogunate, Manjiro lost this elevated status under the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and he took on a university professorship. In this capacity he was part of a diplomatic mission in 1870 that brought him through New York, so he took the train to Massachusetts to visit his old friend, Captain Whitfield.



People of the Ryukus from Nakahama Manjiro (1827-1898), [Hyoson kiriyaku]. The story five of Japanese: a very handsome taile [sic]: manuscript, 1852 October 25. AMs 1296/14

A year later, at age 44, he suffered a mild stroke from which he recovered, but which put him into retirement. He married three times and had seven children. He died at age 71. He inspired many students who served in government and as diplomats abroad. His story also inspired his nation's revolutionary leaders, such as Sakamoto Ryoma, who himself was assassinated for his transformational views.

In 1976, The Rosenbach's Manjiro manuscript was exhibited for the first time at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery's exhibition *Abroad in America: Visitors to the New Nation, 1776-1914*. That same year, *Pacific Overtures*, the musical by Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman premiered on Broadway. Its aim was to tell the story of westernization from the Japanese point of view, but Manjiro was depicted as an unfaithful friend, who murdered those who stood in his way. This characterization may have been an interpretation of the fears of those in the period who were against opening Japan's ports. It certainly does not square with the Manjiro whose devoted followers today in Japan and America attend homestays and lectures and wave the banner of international peace and understanding in his name. Today, a statue of Manjiro stands on the coast of his home prefecture in Japan looking outward over the Pacific towards the United States in tribute to his expansive views and his desire for change.



Statue of Manjiro, Tosashimizu-Shi, Ashizurimisaki, Kochi, Japan, 2013

To learn more about Manjiro, read the translation of the Manjiro manuscript with commentary and accompanying essays:

Junya Nagakuni and Junji Kitadai, *Drifting Towards the Southeast: The Story of Five Japanese Castaways*. New Bedford, Massachusetts: Spinner Publications, 2003

### Youthful Pioneers

The journeys that brought notoriety to both Phillis Wheatley and Nakahama Manjiro were not undertaken by choice, yet the two youthful pioneers transformed the harrowing and remarkable circumstances in which they found themselves to work tremendous good for the world.

# Lord Byron: Inspiring Youthful Writers, Past to Present

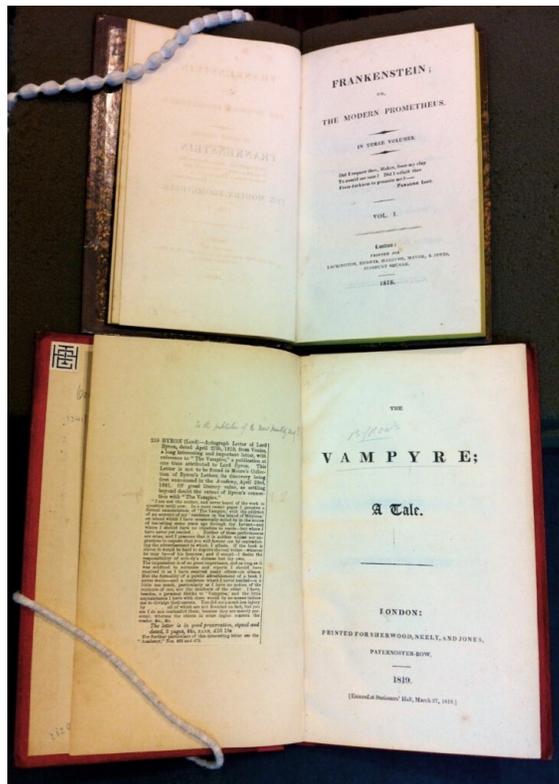
Elizabeth E. Fuller, Librarian, The Rosenbach



David Edwin (1776-1841), *Lord Byron*. [Philadelphia]: engraved for *The Analectic Magazine*, [1814]. stipple engraving. 1954.1045

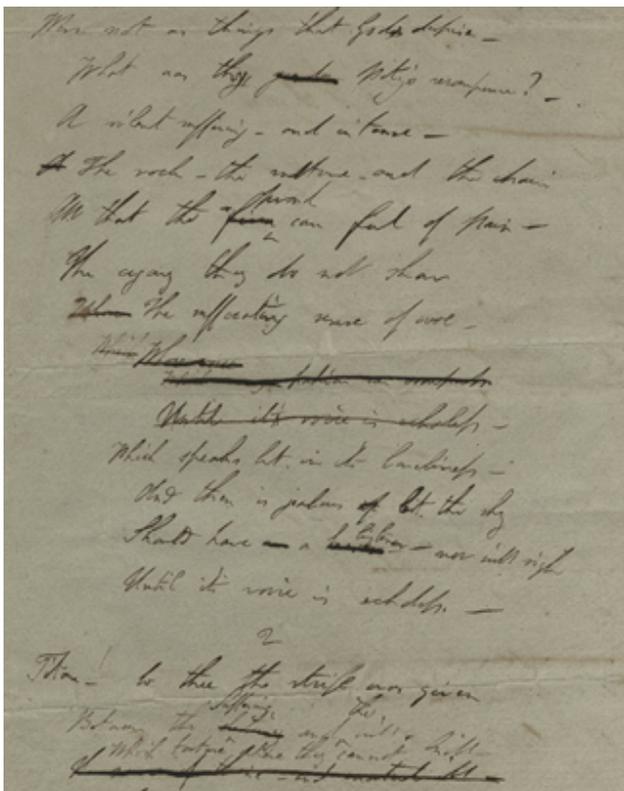
George Gordon Byron, Lord Byron (1788-1824), in his time the most influential of the English Romantic poets, began his writing career in his teens. His poems attracted controversy from the beginning. He quickly suppressed his first book, published privately at the age of 18, when the local minister who was his literary advisor objected to some passages. While still at university his *Hours of Idleness* ("by George Gordon, Lord Byron, A Minor") was savagely reviewed in the prestigious *Edinburgh Review*, leading him to reply with his first major work, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. In its preface, the narrator complains that readers have too much inferior literature to contend with, and states his aim "to make others write better."

His associations with other writers were sometimes contentious, as he could be cruelly dismissive of work that did not meet his standards, but he formed close friendships with others including Percy and Mary Shelley. As the leading member of their circle he served as a catalyst for the work of the younger writers, most notably in the dreary summer of 1816, when he proposed a ghost-story writing contest. Although Byron's own contribution was never completed, it spurred his 20-year-old physician John Polidori to write *The Vampyre*, the first English work in its genre. (It was first published under Byron's name, which displeased them both.) Even more influential was 18-year-old Mary Shelley's contribution, *Frankenstein*. These foundational works in The Rosenbach collection are used in numerous programs that have drawn in new audiences.



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851), *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*. London: Printed for Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones, 1818. EL3 .S5449fr 818

John William Polidori (1795-1821), *The Vampyre*. London: Printed for Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1819. EL3 .P766v 819a



George Gordon Byron, Lord Byron, *Prometheus*: autograph manuscript, [ca. 1816]. EL3 .B996 MS1

Byron's presence in The Rosenbach's collections continues to inspire the work of other young writers, including Philadelphia's Youth Poet Laureate Mia Concepcion. The heavily-revised manuscript for his "Prometheus" gave her the opportunity to observe another poet's creative process.



# THE ROSENBACH

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