

The Wild Honeysuckle

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouch'd thy honey'd blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet:

No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white array'd,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by;
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see thy future doom;
They died—nor were those flowers more gay,
(The flowers that did in Eden bloom)
Unpitying frosts and Autumn's power
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came:
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between is but an hour,
The mere idea of a flower.

Credit

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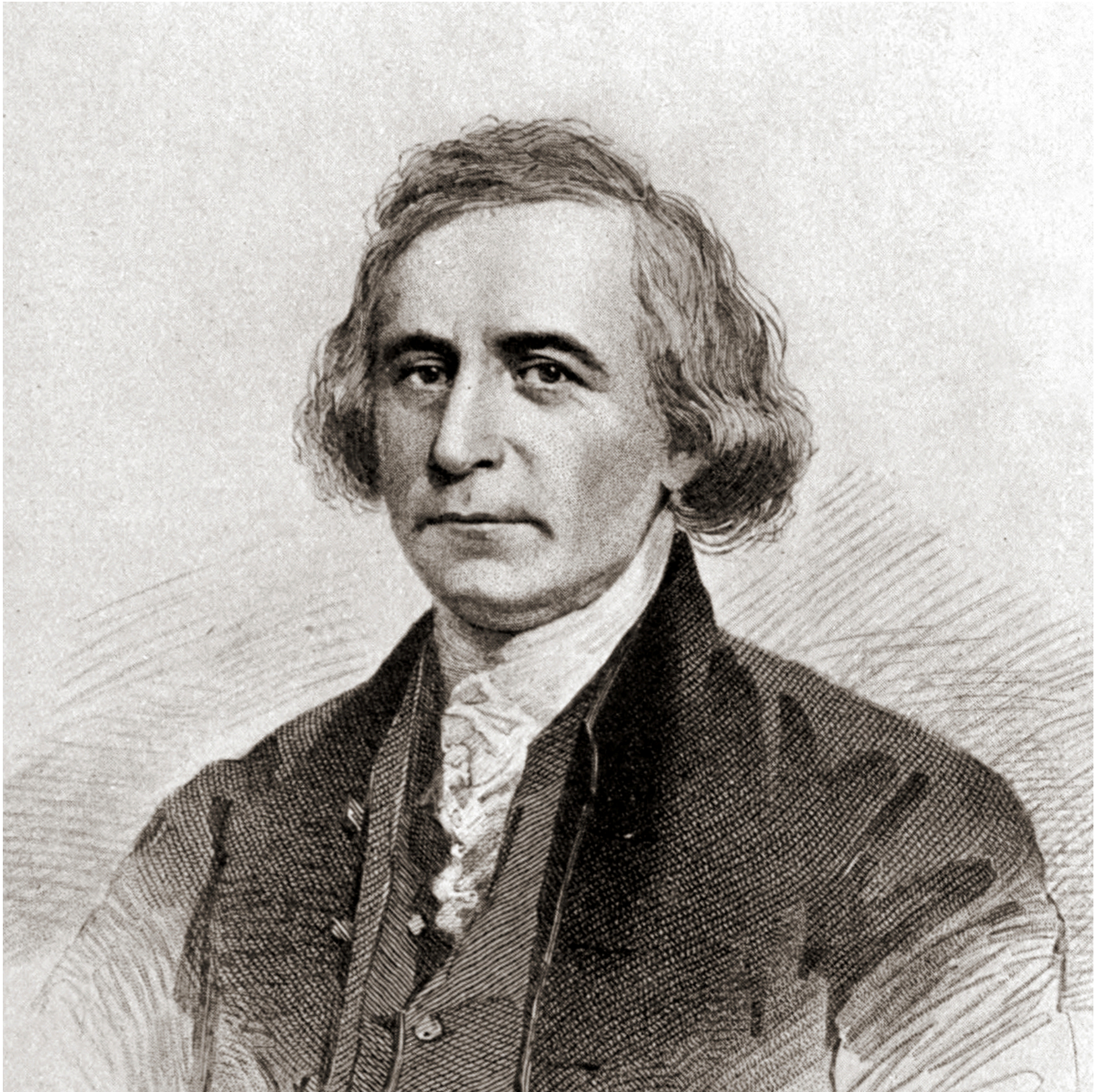
About this Poem

Written in Charleston, S. C., in July, 1786. It appeared first in the *Freeman's Journal*, August 2, 1786, and was republished in the edition of 1788, and in the later editions, almost without change. The poet probably refers to the *Rhododendron Viscosum*, or as some call it the *Asalia viscosun* since it is the only flower popularly known as the wild honeysuckle that is both white and fragrant. According to Chapman's *Southern Flora*, it flowers in the latitude of Charleston in July and August. The text is from the edition of 1809.

Author



Philip Freneau



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Born in New York City and raised in Monmouth County, New Jersey, Philip Morin Freneau graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) in 1771; at the college commencement, his friend Hugh Henry Breckenridge read *The Rising Glory of America*, a poem on which the two had collaborated. While working for a short time as a schoolteacher in Long Island, Freneau published anti-British satirical verses. He spent two years as secretary to a planter on St. Croix.

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