# The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky

*The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft*

Edited by Robert Dale Parker

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## To the Pine Tree

*on first seeing it*
*on returning from Europe*

Shing wauk! Shing wauk! nin ge ik id,
Waish kee wau bum ug, shing wauk
Tuh quish in aun nau aub, ain dak nuk i yaun.
Shing wauk, shing wauk No sa
Shi e gwuh ke do dis au naun
Kau gega way zhau wus co zid.

Mes ah nah, shi egwuh tah gwish en aung
Sin da mik ke aum baun
Kag ait suh, ne meen wain dum
Me nah wau, wau bun dah maun
Gi yut wi au, wau bun dah maun een
Shing wauk, shing wauk nosa
Shi e gwuh ke do dis au naun.

Ka ween ga go, kau wau bun duh e yun
Tib isht co, izz henau gooz ze no an
Shing wauk wah zhau wush co zid
Ween Ait ah kwanaudj e we we
Kau ge gay wa zhau soush ko zid

***Translation***

The pine! the pine! I eager cried,
The pine, my father! see it stand,
As first that cherished tree I spied,
Returning to my native land.
The pine! the pine! oh lovely scene!
The pine, that is forever green.

Ah beauteous tree! ah happy sight!
That greets me on my native strand
And hails me, with a friend's delight,
To my own dear bright mother land
Oh 'tis to me a heart-sweet scene,
The pine—the pine! that's ever green.

Not all the trees of England bright,
Not Erin's lawns of green and light
Are half so sweet to memory's eye,
As this dear type of northern sky
Oh 'tis to me a heart-sweet scene,
The pine—the pine! that ever green.

*To the Pine Tree.* Text from *IL.* In his "Notes for a Memoir of Mrs. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft," addressed to Anna Jameson, HRS* tells the story behind this poem. When JJS returned from Europe as a child in 1810, "On the home route from Quebec to St. Mary's, her father was impressed with the pleasure she appeared to derive from the scenery of her native country (always a strong point of admiration with her) but when, in crossing the Niagara ridge, in the route from Queenston to Fort Erie, she saw the pine, she could not resist the expression of impassioned admiration. 'There pa! see those pines!' she exclaimed, 'after all I have seen abroad, you have nothing equal to the dear pine.' At a later period, I asked her if she could not recal[l] her feelings at the moment, on which [s]he gave me some lines in the Indian language, of which, you [Jameson] will find a translation appended" (96–97). For another version of the same story, written about a decade later, see "Dawn" in this volume. The later version makes it sound as if JJS wrote the poem at a time closer to the event that provoked it, which seems unlikely, given that the event came when she was only ten years old.

The title was at first written as "To the Pine Tree. / seen at Queenston Heights, U. Canada / on returning from Europe." (U. Canada is an abbreviation for Upper Canada, which is now southern Ontario.) The second line of the title is crossed out and replaced with "on first seeing it". Between "returning" and "from" is added "with my father", which is then crossed out (leaving illegible the word that I am supposing is "my").

The English text, with its meter and its different pattern of rhyme, is not a literal translation of the Ojibwe text.

*Ojibwe text.* **1** Though it might not matter for this poem, Shingwauk, The Pine (also called Shingwaukonse, Little Pine), was the name of a prominent and eventually revered Ojibwe chief on the Canadian side of Sault Ste. Marie, well known to the Johnstons and Schoolcrafts. On Shingwauk, see especially Janet E. Chute, *Legacy*, and Chute, "Shingwaukonse," including p. 93 for his connection to the Johnston family. **5** *lovely*: loveliest with "est" crossed out and "i" changed to "y". **17** *Ween*: added in the left margin.

*English text.* **3** *cherished*: written above "darling", which is crossed out. **9** *a friend's*: written above "unmixed", which is crossed out.

HRS = & Henry Rowe Schoolcraft = Jane's husband
JJS = & Jane Johnson Schoolcraft



## To the Miscodeed*

Sweet pink of northern wood and glen,
E'er first to greet the eyes of men
In early spring,—a tender flower
Whilst still the wintry wind hath power.
How welcome, in the sunny glade,
Or hazel copse, thy pretty head
Oft peeping out, whilst still the snow,
Doth here and there, its presence show
Soon leaf and bud quick opening spread
Thy modest petals—white with red
Like some sweet cherub—love's kind link,
With dress of white, adorned with pink.

*The C. Virginica.

*To the Miscodeed.* Text from *IL.* The asterisk and note are in the manuscript. One of the first spring wildflowers, the miscoded (in Ojibwe), Claytonia Virginica (in Latin), or spring beauty is typically white with pink veins, though sometimes it is all pink. See also JJS's "Origin of the Miscodeed or the Maid of Taquimenon." HRS's poem "To Mrs. Schoolcraft. On the Anniversary of Her Birth-Day" includes the lines: "Search the Shadow-border'd mead, / For the blush-lit, *miscodeed,* / Native flower, of odor sweet, / Lover of the calm retreat" (*LC65*). Readers might like to compare "To the Miscodeed" with such once widely read early American poems about wildflowers or blossoms as Philip Freneau's "The Wild Honey Suckle" (1786), William Cullen Bryant's "The Yellow Violet" (1821) and "To the Fringed Gentian" (1832), and Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The Rhodora" (1847).

**11** *love's*: the cherubic Cupid, the god of love, often referred to simply as "love." **12** *dress*: written above "frock", which is crossed out. **12** *white*: another word, now hard to read but perhaps "pure", is crossed out before "white". **12** *adorned*: another word, now illegible, is crossed out before "adorned".

## Lines written at Castle Island, Lake Superior

Here in my native inland sea
From pain and sickness would I flee
And from its shores and island bright
Gather a store of sweet delight.
Lone island of the saltless sea!
How wide, how sweet, how fresh and free
How all transporting—is the view
Of rocks and skies and waters blue
Uniting, as a song's sweet strains
To tell, here nature only reigns.
Ah, nature! here forever sway
Far from the haunts of men away
For here, there are no sordid fears,
No crimes, no misery, no tears
No pride of wealth; the heart to fill,
No laws to treat my people ill.

*Lines written at Castle Island, Lake Superior.* A translation, by HRS or JJS, of a poem in Ojibwe by JJS. The Ojibwe version has not survived. There are three versions, all in HRS's hand. One version appears, untitled, in "Castle Island," a prose manuscript by HRS in *LC62*, recounting a visit to the island on 14 Aug., without naming the year. Another appears in *IL*, and a third and considerably different version appears in "Dawn." Because the prose manuscript's detail gives it the air of having been written soon after the event and during JJS's lifetime, I have chosen its version for the text. Since "Dawn" was written later and includes revisions on the manuscript, HRS probably revised the poem for "Dawn." I take the title from *IL*. The revisions in *IL* might come from JJS, HRS, or both of them. In the prose manuscript, HRS describes a voyage with JJS and their children west across Lake Superior off the coast of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, focusing on their day trip to an isolated island "due north" of Granite Point. He describes the poem as "a free translation of some lines in the Odjibwa language, handed me by Mrs. S. the original of which is cherished as a morceau of Indian literature." "Finding the island without a distinctive name, among the Odjibwas," he adds, "Mrs. S. proposed the appropriate one of Castle Island, in allusion to its castellated appearance at a distance." "Dawn" refers to it as "a volcanic little island called Nebiquon in the entrance of lake Superior" and describes the voyage as an "inspiring" and "invigorating" effort to restore JJS's health.



Identifying the exact island has taken some sleuthing. Castle Island lies to the northwest off the coast of Isle Royale, much too far to be the island in question, and there is no island due north of Granite Point. But it turns out that the place names have changed over the years. In 1820, HRS himself provided the name Granite Point for what is now called Little Presque Isle; his 1821 *Narrative Journal* of the Cass expedition even includes a hand-colored geological cross-section of Granite Point (158–60), and Thomas L. McKenney describes exploring Granite Point with HRS in 1826 (McKenney 193–95). Seven miles northwest of the present Marquette, Michigan, Little Presque Isle was connected to the mainland as late as the early twentieth century, and until then it was called Granite Point, not to be confused with the current Granite Point, farther northwest. Due north of Little Presque Isle lies Granite Island, which fits the description in HRS's account, and which in Ojibwe is called Na-Be-Quon, which translates into English as ship or vessel (Baraga 2: 262; H. R. Schoolcraft et al., *Vocabulary, LC61*; *AR* 2: 46). HRS's *Personal Memoirs* clinch the identification and the year, recalling a visit on 6 Aug. 1838 to "the dimly seen island in the lake, off Presque Isle and Granite Point, called *Nabikwon* by the Indians, from the effects of mirage. Its deep volcanic chasms, and upheaved rocks, tell a story of mighty elemental conflicts in the season of storms" (603). On the history of the name for Little Presque Isle, see Bernard C. Peters 56, 61, 63–64. (For another reference to Granite Point, see the note to next poem, "On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior.")

Schoolcraft begins this poem with a revealing identification with her region, as in "The Miscodeed" and "To the Pine Tree," and with a sense of her own "pain and sickness" that many of her letters and other poems reveal as characteristic. The resentment of cosmopolitan artificiality fits what we might expect from someone who preferred life away from the cities and resented the exoticizing gaze she met in New York. Even so, the resentment of laws that mistreat her people stands out with its uncharacteristically direct political statement. HRS may have written it; if so, he presumably sought to express something that he sensed or wanted to sense in JJS's poem. But in the absence of any evidence that HRS wrote those words (as opposed to translating them), it seems telling that poetry in general and poetry about her devotion to the region in particular would bring out from JJS this passionate anticolonialist lament.

**5** *island*: islet *IL*. **6–9** How vast is all around—how free! / The waves come dashing clear and bright / The heavens are blue—the sky is bright / And all unites in sweetest strains *IL*. **13** *sordid fears*: false displays *IL*. **14–15** No lures to lead in folly's maze / Or fashion's rounds to hurt or kill. *IL*. **16** *treat*: the word "treat" can evoke the sorry history of treaties between the U.S. government and Indian nations. **16** Two more lines follow line 16 in *IL*: But all is glorious, free, and grand, / Fresh from the great Creator's hand.

## On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior

*To a Friend*

Dwellers at home, in indolence and ease,
How deep their debt, to those that roam the seas,
Or cross the lands, in quest of every art
That science, knowledge, pity can impart
To help mankind, or guild the lettered page
The bold discoverers of every age.

This spirit—in thy breast the ardent guide
To seek new lands, and wastes as yet untried
Where none but hunters trod the field before
Unveiled the grandeur of Superior's show
Where nature's forms in varied shape and guise
Break on the view, with wonder and surprize.
Not least, among those forms, the traveller's tale,
These pillared rocks and castle pomps prevail
Standing, like some vast ruin of the plain,
Where ancient victims by their priests were slain
But far more wondrous,—for the fair design
No architect drew out, with measured line
'Twas nature's wildest flower, that graved the Rock,
The waves' loud fury, and the tempest's shock
Yet all that arts can do, here frowning shine,
In mimic pride, and grandeur of design.

The simple Indian, as the work he spies,
Looks up to nature's God above the skies
And though, his lot be rugged wild and dear,
Yet owns the ruling power with soul sincere,
Not as where, Asia's piles of marble high,
For idol gods the beast was doomed to die,
But, guided by a purer-led surprise,
*Points to the great good sovreign of the skies*
And thinks the power that built the upper sphere,
Hath left but traces of his fingers here.



Figure 8. Front view of the Doric Rock, Lake Superior. 1826 water color copy by Fielding Lucas of an 1826 sketch by James Otto Lewis. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

*On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior.* Text from *IL.* As early as the first European record of the region, by the French adventurer and trader Pierre Esprit Radisson in 1661, the Doric Rock was noted as a place of veneration and sacrifice (Radisson 190–91). The voyageurs called it La Chapelle, a name still in use in English as the Chapel. The Chapel still stands, despite some accounts to the contrary (Peters 49–50). HRS opened his 1821 *Narrative Journal*, which would have been familiar to JJS, with an illustration of the Doric Rock on the frontispiece, followed by a detailed description later in the book (152–53). In the summer of 1831, he led a large federal expedition west from Sault Ste. Marie to the Mississippi River; Galena, Illinois; and Prairie du Chien in present-day Wisconsin to negotiate a treaty, vaccinate Indians against smallpox, and conduct scientific exploration. JJS and the children accompanied the expedition on the beginning of the voyage as far as Lake Superior (H. Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs* 350). Among the party were JJS's brother George Johnston, Douglass Houghton, Melancthon L. Woolsey (a young printer from Detroit, according to HRS's *Personal Memoirs* 350), and Lieutenant Robert Clary. For an account of the expedition, see Bremer 123–26.

Both HRS and Woolsey wrote JJS letters that described the Doric Rock, part of the Pictured Rocks region on the Michigan coast. On 3 July, HRS wrote from Granite Point: "We passed the Pictured Rocks that morning, and I have only to name them to remind you that granduer [*sic*] here puts on

such varied forms, as to keep the eye constantly on the stretch. We took our dinner in the little cove near the Doric Rock, partaking of one of your pies, for a desert. And I took a new view of the interesting object, showing it in quite another point of view. Mr. Clary was perfectly delighted with it . . . and said he was repaid for the voyage, if he saw nothing else. But the boldest scenes were beyond. The outer arch of the main point, which we saw in 1820, has fallen down, but I passed with my canoe, [illegible word] standing, beneath the inner arch, turned about in it, & came out out [*sic*], as the fallen rocks on the other side prevented our going out" (*LC37*).

Woolsey's effusive letters to JJS suggest that he had something of a crush on her. His description in a letter of 5 July, while lengthy (though only part of a much longer letter), together with HRS's letter suggests a source or at the least a closely contemporary analog for the description in JJS's poem: "we commenced a minute examination of the celebrated Doric Rock. The principal arch, under which we were, is about twenty feet in height; and while standing under its crumbling walls, our sensations were not lessened by the idea that in an instant it might be said of us, *we had been*. At our left, and in the centre of one of the large pillars another arch is formed,—upon entering this we still find one more at our right, and which commands a view of the lake. Between the two stands a pillar of stone, near four feet in height, entirely detached at the sides, and composed of thin plates of sand-rock. As we go out from these, for the purpose of ascending the roof, a large urn of nature's own design and workmanship, appears before us. It might be a fit depository for the ashes of some of those mighty men, who before the children 'with a white, white face,' overran their country, strode through these forests, or, in their light canoes bounded over these vast waters—but alas, their graves and those of their fathers are mingling with the common dust! Near this urn are the remains of an Indian's fire, which he had lighted at the close of his fast, when propitiating his Manito—a place well calculated to foster the wildness of superstition, and which to a mind more enlightened than that of the poor wanderer of the wilderness, would not be deficient in suggestions of mystery. Who can wonder that the untaught natives of a region like this, should make to themselves a Deity in the rushing stream or the beetling cliff? They act from the impulse of nature, and well will it be for those who enjoy every advantage that civilization and Christianity can bestow, if when weighed in the balance, even with the pagan Indian, they are not found wanting. We were soon at the top of the Doric Rock, and from its dizzy height the prospect was such as to preclude all attempt at delineation, at least by language. Your brother expressed his emotion as well as it was in the power of any mortal to do. Clapping his hands together, and putting a peculiar emphasis upon the last syllable, he exclaimed "Oh! *Oh!*" Nothing more could be said. But while enjoying the grandeur of the scene, I wished that M. was at my side, for my pleasure would have been increased ten-fold by sharing it with her. The summit of the arch is itself a curiosity. It does not appear to be more than three feet in thickness, and yet it supports and nourishes several lofty pine trees, whose weight alone I should think would crush it to atoms. The root of one of them winds around the outer edge of the rock, as if to support the source of its existence. But we had not long to indulge our admiration, for our table was spread under the shade of one of these immense rocks, and all the sublimity around us could not satisfy the imperious demands of appetite; so after regaling ourselves on some of the dainties furnished by our excellent friends at the Sault, we departed to behold new wonders, and utter repeated exclamations of, *Oh! Oh!*" Perhaps these letters provoked JJS to write this poem. (Woolsey's letter of 5 July does not survive in manuscript, but in 1836 it appeared, with his other letters to JJS—and with an introduction by HRS, next to a poem by HRS—in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, a leading journal edited by none other than Edgar Allan Poe. HRS later reprinted Woolsey's letters in *Oneota*.)



HRS passed by the Doric Rock again the following year with another expedition, and James Allen's journal from that expedition, which was soon published and reprinted, includes yet another detailed description of the Doric Rock (169). JJS would also have seen the description in Thomas L. McKenney's *Sketches* (185–86).

**8** *wastes as yet*: written above "seas before", which is crossed out. **15–16** Ancient ruins were a preoccupation of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British and American poetry; see Goldstein, *Ruins and Empire*. **20** *waves'*: editor's emendation of "waves". **32** *but*: written above "the", which is crossed out. "But" would seem to diminish the value of the "traces" compared to the vast force of even so modest a figure of the "power" as its "fingers".