

## Rebirth of a Name by Willeena Booker

My name never  
mattered.  
Not to anyone  
of this strange new land  
I was counted captured cargo,

Some stuff  
stuffed down deck  
Where freedom's withered  
arms bent back towards Africa

bodies packed airtight  
none handled with care,  
None to care that I was there.

My African name  
danced between tribes and truth  
it was lost in captivity  
the day I was plucked from Africa's roots.

My new name meant nothing.  
Not to anyone  
Not at first.  
I was Fitch's inventory  
of a bad batch,  
unwanted and enslaved.  
sailing the seas  
sealed to a slave's  
hopeless hand

poor property,  
goods, but never good enough,  
Like damaged goods  
A compass with no rose  
Lost like a motherless child,  
far away from my home.

snatched from Africa's bosom.  
Susanna Wheatley, made a  
purchase of inhumanity  
when she bought me  
as personal property.

The Wheatley family  
set my benighted soul free  
when they educated me on liberty

I wrote poems emphatically,  
At last published poetic pages  
penned by me  
the first Black person  
to do so in history.

Here between syllable and incivility  
my name was born,  
it took shape and form,  
from the song of the sea

Soon my name came to be,  
rising like the sun so sweetly

An extraordinary name  
Of incredible fame  
eloquence became  
the wonder of my  
exquisite name,  
now in the history books,  
among the scholarly famed.

