



The Life of John Thompson, a Fugitive Slave: Containing His History of 25 Years in Bondage, and His Providential Escape (Penguin Classics)

John Thompson

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The unique narrative of a slave who fled to freedom and sailed aboard a whaling vessel

John Thompson was born into slavery on a Maryland plantation in 1812. Originally published in 1856, *The Life of John Thompson, a Fugitive Slave* chronicles his enslavement, his escape, and his life in the North, where he lived as a free man until fear of recapture drove him to flee once again—this time to sea aboard the *Milwood*, a whaling vessel. The only fugitive slave narrator to report a whaling voyage, Thompson crafted from his seafaring experience an allegorical sermon that caps his Life and renders it a kind of African American *Pilgrim's Progress*, as well as a narrative of struggle with, escape from, and triumph over American slavery.

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