

“PHYLLIS”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day,
Few are my years, but my griefs are not few,
Ever to youth should each day be a May-day,
Warm wind and rose-breath and diamonded dew—
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day.

Oh for the sunlight that shines on a May-day!
Only the cloud hangeth over my life.
Love that should bring me youth's happiest heyday
Brings me but seasons of sorrow and strife;
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day.

Sunshine or shadow, or gold day or gray day,
Life must be lived as our destinies rule;
Leisure or labor or work day or play day—
Feasts for the famous and fun for the fool;
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day.