

“AT CANDLE-LIGHTIN’ TIME”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

When I come in f’om de co’n-fiel’ aftah wo’kin’ ha’d all day,
It ’s amazin’ nice to fin’ my suppah all erpon de way;
An’ it ’s nice to smell de coffee bubblin’ ovah in de pot,
An’ it ’s fine to see de meat a–sizzlin’ teasin’–lak an’ hot.

But when suppah–time is ovah, an’ de t’ings is cleahed away;
Den de happy hours dat foller are de sweetes’ of de day.
When my co’ncob pipe is sta’ted, an’ de smoke is drawin’ prime,
My ole ‘ooman says, “I reckon, Ike, it ’s candle–lightin’ time.”

Den de chillun snuggle up to me, an’ all commence to call,
“Oh, say, daddy, now it ’s time to mek de shadders on de wall.”
So I puts my han’s togethah—evah daddy knows de way,—
An’ de chillun snuggle closer roun’ ez I begin to say:—

“Fus’ thing, hyeah come Mistah Rabbit; don’ you see him wo’k his eahs?
Huh, uh! dis mus’ be a donkey,—look, how innercent he ‘pears!
Dah ’s de ole black swan a–swimmin’—ain’t she got a’ awful neck?
Who ’s dis feller dat ’s a–comin’? Why, dat ’s ole dog Tray, I ‘spec’!”

Dat ’s de way I run on, tryin’ fu’ to please ‘em all I can;
Den I hollahs, “Now be keerful—dis hyeah las’ ’s de buga–man!”
An’ dey runs an’ hides dey faces; dey ain’t skeered—dey ’s lettin’ on:
But de play ain’t raaly ovah twell dat buga–man is gone.

So I jes' teks up my banjo, an' I plays a little chune,
An' you see dem haid come peepin' out to listen mighty soon.
Den my wife says, "Sich a pappy fu' to give you sich a fright!
Jes, you go to baid, an' leave him: say yo' prayers an' say good-night."