

# “A SUMMER PASTORAL”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

It's hot to-day. The bees is buzzin'  
Kinder don't-keer-like aroun'  
An' fur off the warm air dances  
O'er the parchin' roofs in town.  
In the brook the cows is standin';  
Childern hidin' in the hay;  
Can't keep none of 'em a workin',  
'Cause it's hot to-day.

It's hot to-day. The sun is blazin'  
Like a great big ball o' fire;  
Seems as ef instead o' settin'  
It keeps mountin' higher an' higher.  
I'm as triflin' as the children,  
Though I blame them lots an' scold;  
I keep slippin' to the spring-house,  
Where the milk is rich an' cold.

The very air within its shadder  
Smells o' cool an' restful things,  
An' a roguish little robin  
Sits above the place an' sings.  
I don't mean to be a shirkin',  
But I linger by the way  
Longer, mebbe, than is needful,  
'Cause it's hot to-day.

It's hot to-day. The horses stumble  
Half asleep across the fiel's;  
An' a host o' teasin' fancies  
O'er my burnin' senses steals,—  
Dreams o' cool rooms, curtains lowered,  
An' a sofy's temptin' look;  
Patter o' composin' raindrops  
Or the ripple of a brook.

I strike a stump! That wakes me sudden;  
Dreams all vanish into air.  
Lordy! how I chew my whiskers;  
'Twouldn't do fur me to swear.  
But I have to be so keerful  
'Bout my thoughts an' what I say;

Somethin' might slip out unheeded,  
'Cause it's hot to-day.

Git up, there, Suke! you, Sal, git over!  
Sakes alive! how I do sweat.  
Every stitch that I've got on me,  
Bet a cent, is wringin' wet.  
If this keeps up, I'll lose my temper.  
Gee there, Sal, you lazy brute!  
Wonder who on airth this weather  
Could 'a' be'n got up to suit?

You, Sam, go bring a tin o' water;  
Dash it all, don't be so slow!  
'Pears as ef you tuk an hour  
'Tween each step to stop an' blow.  
Think I want to stand a meltin'  
Out here in this b'ilin' sun,  
While you stop to think about it?  
Lift them feet o' your'n an' run.

It ain't no use; I'm plumb fetaggled.  
Come an' put this team away.  
I won't plow another furrer;

It's too mortal hot to-day.  
I ain't weak, nor I ain't lazy,  
But I'll stand this half day's loss  
'Fore I let the devil make me  
Lose my patience an' git cross.