

# “AN OLD MEMORY”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

How sweet the music sounded  
That summer long ago,  
When you were by my side, love,  
To list its gentle flow.

I saw your eyes a-shining,  
I felt your rippling hair,  
I kissed your pearly cheek, love,  
And had no thought of care.

And gay or sad the music,  
With subtle charm replete;  
I found in after years, love  
‘Twas you that made it sweet.

For standing where we heard it,  
I hear again the strain;  
It wakes my heart, but thrills it  
With sad, mysterious pain.

It pulses not so joyous  
As when you stood with me,  
And hand in hand we listened  
To that low melody.

Oh, could the years turn back, love!  
Oh, could events be changed  
To what they were that time, love,  
Before we were estranged;

Wert thou once more a maiden  
Whose smile was gold to me;  
Were I once more the lover  
Whose word was life to thee,—

O God! could all be altered,  
The pain, the grief, the strife,  
And wert thou—as thou shouldst be—  
My true and loyal wife!

But all my tears are idle,  
And all my wishes vain.  
What once you were to me, love,  
You may not be again.

For I, alas! like others,  
Have missed my dearest aim.  
I asked for love. Oh, mockery!  
Fate comes to me with fame!