

“WORN OUT”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

You bid me hold my peace
And dry my fruitless tears,
 Forgetting that I bear
A pain beyond my years.

You say that I should smile
And drive the gloom away;
I would, but sun and smiles
Have left my life's dark day.

All time seems cold and void,
And naught but tears remain;
 Life's music beats for me
 A melancholy strain.

I used at first to hope,
But hope is past and, gone;
 And now without a ray
My cheerless life drags on.

Like to an ash–stained hearth
When all its fires are spent;
Like to an autumn wood
By storm winds rudely shent,—

So sadly goes my heart,
Unclothed of hope and peace;
It asks not joy again,
But only seeks release.