

# “ODE FOR MEMORIAL DAY”

BY

**PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR**

Done are the toils and the wearisome marches,  
Done is the summons of bugle and drum.  
Softly and sweetly the sky over-arches,  
Shelt'ring a land where Rebellion is dumb.  
Dark were the days of the country's derangement,  
Sad were the hours when the conflict was on,  
But through the gloom of fraternal estrangement  
God sent his light, and we welcome the dawn.  
O'er the expanse of our mighty dominions,  
Sweeping away to the uttermost parts,  
Peace, the wide-flying, on untiring pinions,  
Bringeth her message of joy to our hearts.

Ah, but this joy which our minds cannot measure,  
What did it cost for our fathers to gain!  
Bought at the price of the heart's dearest treasure,  
Born out of travail and sorrow and pain;  
Born in the battle where fleet Death was flying,

Slaying with sabre—stroke bloody and fell;  
Born where the heroes and martyrs were dying,  
Torn by the fury of bullet and shell.  
Ah, but the day is past: silent the rattle,  
And the confusion that followed the fight.  
Peace to the heroes who died in the battle,  
Martyrs to truth and the crowning of Right!

Out of the blood of a conflict fraternal,  
Out of the dust and the dimness of death,  
Burst into blossoms of glory eternal  
Flowers that sweeten the world with their breath.  
Flowers of charity, peace, and devotion  
Bloom in the hearts that are empty of strife;  
Love that is boundless and broad as the ocean  
Leaps into beauty and fulness of life.  
So, with the singing of paeans and chorals,  
And with the flag flashing high in the sun,  
Place on the graves of our heroes the laurels  
Which their unfaltering valor has won!