

# “MELANCHOLIA”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Silently without my window,  
Tapping gently at the pane,  
Falls the rain.  
Through the trees sighs the breeze  
Like a soul in pain.  
Here alone I sit and weep;  
Thought hath banished sleep.

Wearily I sit and listen  
To the water's ceaseless drip.  
To my lip  
Fate turns up the bitter cup,  
Forcing me to sip;  
'T is a bitter, bitter drink,  
Thus I sit and think,—

Thinking things unknown and awful,  
Thoughts on wild, uncanny themes,  
Waking dreams.  
Spectres dark, corpses stark,  
Show the gaping seams

Whence the cold and cruel knife  
Stole away their life.

Bloodshot eyes all strained and staring,  
Gazing ghastly into mine;  
Blood like wine  
On the brow — clotted now —  
Shows death's dreadful sign.  
Lonely vigil still I keep;  
Would that I might sleep!

Still, oh, still, my brain is whirling!  
Still runs on my stream of thought;  
I am caught  
In the net fate hath set.  
Mind and soul are brought  
To destruction's very brink;  
Yet I can but think!

Eyes that look into the future, —  
Peeping forth from out my mind,  
They will find  
Some new weight, soon or late,  
On my soul to bind,  
Crushing all its courage out, —  
Heavier than doubt.

Dawn, the Eastern monarch's daughter,  
Rising from her dewy bed,  
Lays her head  
'Gainst the clouds' sombre shrouds  
Now half fringed with red.  
O'er the land she 'gins to peep;  
Come, O gentle Sleep!

Hark! the morning cock is crowing;  
Dreams, like ghosts, must hie away;  
'Tis the day.  
Rosy morn now is born;  
Dark thoughts may not stay.  
Day my brain from foes will keep;  
Now, my soul, I sleep.