

# “WHEN MALINDY SINGS”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

G’way an’ quit dat noise, Miss Lucy—  
Put dat music book away;  
What’s de use to keep on tryin’?  
Ef you practise twell you ‘re gray,  
You cain’t sta’t no notes a-flyin’  
Lak de ones dat rants and rings  
F’om de kitchen to be big woods  
When Malindy sings.

You ain’t got de nachel o’gans  
Fu’ to make de soun’ come right,  
You ain’t got de tu’ns an’ twistin’s  
Fu’ to make it sweet an’ light.  
Tell you one thing now, Miss Lucy,  
An’ I ‘m tellin’ you fu’ true,  
When hit comes to raal right singin’,  
‘T ain’t no easy thing to do.

Easy 'nough fu' folks to hollah,  
Lookin' at de lines an' dots,  
When dey ain't no one kin sence it,  
An' de chune comes in, in spots;  
But fu' real melojous music,  
Dat jes' strikes yo' hea't and clings,  
Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me  
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah hyeahd Malindy?  
Blessed soul, tek up de cross!  
Look hyeah, ain't you jokin', honey?  
Well, you don't know whut you los'.  
Y' ought to hyeah dat gal a-wa'blin',  
Robins, la'ks, an' all dem things,  
Heish dey moufs an' hides dey faces  
When Malindy sings.

Fiddlin' man jes' stop his fiddlin',  
Lay his fiddle on de she'f;  
Mockin'—bird quit tryin' to whistle,  
'Cause he jes' so shamed hisse'f.  
Folks a—playin' on de banjo  
Draps dey fingahs on de strings—

Bless yo' soul—fu'gits to move em,  
When Malindy sings.

She jes' spreads huh mouf and hollahs,  
“Come to Jesus,” twell you hyeah  
Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and voices,  
Timid—lak a—drawin' neah;  
Den she tu'ns to “Rock of Ages,”  
Simply to de cross she clings,  
An' you fin' yo' teahs a—drappin'  
When Malindy sings.

Who dat says dat humble praises  
Wif de Master nevah counts?  
Heish yo' mouf, I hyeah dat music,  
Ez hit rises up an' mounts—  
Floatin' by de hills an' valleys,  
Way above dis buryin' sod,  
Ez hit makes its way in glory  
To de very gates of God!

Oh, hit's sweetah dan de music  
Of an edicated band;  
An' hit's dearah dan de battle's

Song o' triumph in de lan'.  
It seems holier dan evenin'  
When de solemn chu'ch bell rings,  
Ez I sit an' ca'mly listen  
While Malindy sings.

Towsah, stop dat ba'kin', hyeah me!  
Mandy, mek dat chile keep still;  
Don't you hyeah de echoes callin'  
F'om de valley to de hill?  
Let me listen, I can hyeah it,  
Th'oo de bresh of angels' wings,  
Sof an' sweet, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,"  
Ez Malindy sings.