

“SONNET (ON AN OLD BOOK WITH UNCUT LEAVES)”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Emblem of blasted hope and lost desire,
No finger ever traced thy yellow page
Save Time's. Thou hast not wrought to noble rage
The hearts thou wouldst have stirred. Not any fire
Save sad flames set to light a funeral pyre
Dost thou suggest. Nay,—impotent in age,
Unsought, thou holdst a corner of the stage
And ceasest even dumbly to aspire.

How different was the thought of him that writ.
What promised he to love of ease and wealth,
When men should read and kindle at his wit.
But here decay eats up the book by stealth,
While it, like some old maiden, solemnly,
Hugs its incongruous virginity!