

# “THE OLD FRONT GATE”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

W'en daih 's chillun in de house,  
Dey keep on a-gittin' tall;  
But de folks don' seem to see  
Dat dey 's growin' up at all,  
'Twell dey fin' out some fine day  
Dat de gals has 'menced to grow,  
Wen dey notice as dey pass  
Dat de front gate 's saggin' low.

Wen de hinges creak an' cry,  
An' de bahs go slantin' down,  
You kin reckon dat hit's time  
Fu' to cas' yo' eye erroun',  
'Cause daih ain't no 'sputin' dis,  
Hit's de trues' sign to show  
Dat daih 's cou'tin' goin' on  
Wen de ol' front gate sags low.

Oh, you grumble an' complain,  
An' you prop dat gate up right;  
But you notice right nex' day  
Dat hit's in de same ol' plight.  
So you fin' dat hit's a rule,  
An' daih ain' no use to blow,  
W'en de gals is growin' up,  
Dat de front gate will sag low.

Den you t'ink o' yo' young days,  
W'en you cou'ted Sally Jane,  
An' you so't o' feel ashamed  
Fu' to grumble an' complain,  
'Cause yo' ricerlection says,  
An' you know hits wo'ds is so,  
Dat huh pappy had a time  
Wid his front gate saggin' low.

So you jes' looks on an' smiles  
At 'em leanin' on de gate,  
Tryin' to t'ink whut he kin say  
Fu' to keep him daih so late,  
But you lets dat gate erlone,  
Fu' yo' 'sperunce goes to show,  
'Twell de gals is ma'ied off,  
It gwine keep on saggin' low.