

# “SPEAKIN’ AT DE COU’T- HOUSE”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Dey been speakin’ at de cou’t–house,  
An’ laws–a–massy me,  
‘T was de beatness kin’ o’ doin’s  
Dat evah I did see.  
Of cose I had to be dah  
In de middle o’ de crowd,  
An’ I halloed wid de othahs,  
Wen de speakah riz and bowed.

I was kind o’ disapp’inted  
At de smallness of de man,  
Case I ‘d allus pictered great folks  
On a mo’ expansive plan;  
But I t’ought I could respect him  
An’ tek in de wo’ds he said,  
Fu’ dey sho was somp’n knowin’  
In de bald spot on his haid.

But hit did seem so't o' funny  
Aftah waitin' fu' a week  
Dat de people kep' on shoutin'  
So de man des could n't speak;  
De ho'ns dey blared a little,  
Den dey let loose on de drums,—  
Some one toll me dey was playin'  
“See de conkerin' hero comes.”

“Well,” says I, “you all is white folks,  
But you 's sutny actin' queer,  
What's de use of heroes comin'  
Ef dey cain't talk w'en dey's here?”  
Aftah while dey let him open,  
An' dat man he waded in,  
An' he fit de wahs all ovah  
Winnin' vicereries lak sin.

Wen he come down to de present,  
Den he made de feathahs fly.  
He des waded in on money,  
An' he played de ta'iff high.  
An' he said de colah question,  
Hit was ovah, solved, an' done,  
Dat de dahky was his brothah,  
Evah blessed mothah's son.

Well he settled all de trouble  
Dat's been pesterin' de lan',  
Den he set down mid de cheerin'  
An' de playin' of de ban'.  
I was feelin' moughty happy  
'Twell I hyeahed somebody speak,  
"Well, dat's his side of de bus'ness,  
But you wait for Jones nex' week."