

# “THE MURDERED LOVER”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Say a mass for my soul's repose, my brother,  
Say a mass for my soul's repose, I need it,  
Lovingly lived we, the sons of one mother,  
Mine was the sin, but I pray you not heed it.

Dark were her eyes as the sloe and they called me,  
Called me with voice independent of breath.  
God! how my heart beat; her beauty appalled me,  
Dazed me, and drew to the sea-brink of death.

Lithe was her form like a willow. She beckoned,  
What could I do save to follow and follow,  
Nothing of right or result could be reckoned;  
Life without her was unworthy and hollow.

Ay, but I wronged thee, my brother, my brother;  
Ah, but I loved her, thy beautiful wife.

Shade of our father, and soul of our mother,  
Have I not paid for my love with my life?

Dark was the night when, revengeful, I met you,  
Deep in the heart of a desolate land.  
Warm was the life–blood which angrily wet you  
Sharp was the knife that I felt from your hand.

Wept you, oh, wept you, alone by the river,  
When my stark carcass you secretly sank.  
Ha, now I see that you tremble and shiver;  
'T was but my spirit that passed when you shrank!

Weep not, oh, weep not, 't is over, 't is over;  
Stir the dark weeds with the turn of the tide;  
Go, thou hast sent me forth, ever a rover,  
Rest and the sweet realm of heaven denied.

Say a mass for my soul's repose, my brother,  
Say a mass for my soul, I need it.  
Sin of mine was it, and sin of no other,  
Mine was it all, but I pray you not heed it.