

“POSSUM TROT”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I ‘ve journeyed ‘roun’ consid’able, a–seein’ men an’ things,
An’ I ‘ve learned a little of the sense that meetin’ people brings;
But in spite of all my travellin’ an’ of all I think I know,
I ‘ve got one notion in my head, that I can’t git to go;
An’ it is that the folks I meet in any other spot
Ain’t half so good as them I knowed back home in Possum Trot.

I know you ‘ve never heerd the name, it ain’t a famous place,
An’ I reckon ef you ‘d search the map you could n’t find a trace
Of any sich locality as this I ‘ve named to you;
But never mind, I know the place, an’ I love it dearly too.
It don’t make no pretensions to bein’ great or fine,
The circuses don’t come that way, they ain’t no railroad line.
It ain’t no great big city, where the schemers plan an’ plot,
But jest a little settlement, this place called Possum Trot.

But don’t you think the folks that lived in that outlandish place
Were ignorant of all the things that go for sense or grace.
Why, there was Hannah Dyer, you may search this teemin’ earth
An’ never find a sweeter girl, er one o’ greater worth;
An’ Uncle Abner Williams, a–leanin’ on his staff,
It seems like I kin hear him talk, an’ hear his hearty laugh.

His heart was big an' cheery as a sunny acre lot,
Why, that's the kind o' folks we had down there at Possum Trot.

Good times? Well, now, to suit my taste,—an' I 'm some hard to suit,—
There ain't been no sich pleasure sence, an' won't be none to boot,
With huskin' bees in Harvest time, an' dances later on,
An' singin' school, an' taffy pulls, an' fun from night till dawn.
Revivals come in winter time, baptizin's in the spring,
You 'd ought to seen those people shout, an' heerd 'em pray an' sing;
You 'd ought to 've heard ole Parson Brown a-throwin' gospel shot
Among the saints an' sinners in the days of Possum Trot.

We live up in the city now, my wife was bound to come;
I hear aroun' me day by day the endless stir an' hum.
I reckon that it done me good, an' yet it done me harm,
That oil was found so plentiful down there on my ole farm.
We 've got a new-styled preacher, our church is new-styled too,
An' I 've come down from what I knowed to rent a cushioned pew.
But often when I 'm settin' there, it's foolish, like as not,
To think of them ol' benches in the church at Possum Trot.

I know that I 'm ungrateful, an' sich thoughts must be a sin,
But I find myself a wishin' that the times was back agin.
With the huskin's an' the frolics, an' the joys' I used to know,
When I lived at the settlement, a dozen years ago.
I don't feel this way often, I 'm scarcely ever glum,
For life has taught me how to take her chances as they come.
But now an' then my mind goes back to that ol' buryin' plot,
That holds the dust of some I loved, down there at Possum Trot.