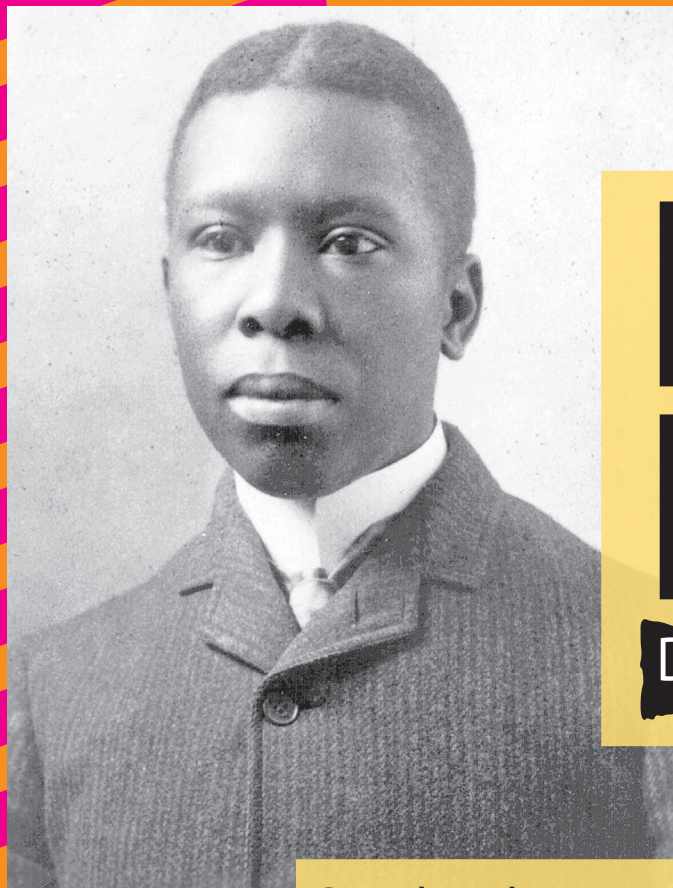


2015-2016

# DISCOVERY



Resource Guide



## LYRIC FIRE:

Dunbar in Motion

Based on the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar  
Produced by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company  
Choreographed by Dianne McIntyre

**MAY 4, 2016**

**9:30 & 11:30 A.M. • VICTORIA THEATRE**

The Frank M. *Cait* FOUNDATION  
**Discovery**

*Series*

**VICTORIA  
THEATRE**  
ASSOCIATION  
[www.victoriatheatre.com](http://www.victoriatheatre.com)

**W**elcome to the 2015-2016 Frank M. Tait Foundation Discovery Series at Victoria Theatre Association. We are very excited to be your partner in providing professional arts experiences to you and your students!

Dayton is known for its aviation heritage, technological innovations, and industry. But Dayton also has an amazing legacy with the arts. Paul Laurence Dunbar is an inspirational literary figure who was born and raised in Dayton. A friend and contemporary of the Wright Brothers, he began writing very early as a student. Although he was unable to afford to attend college after graduating high school, Paul Laurence Dunbar consistently drew inspiration for his poetry from the stories of his parents and their experiences on a plantation in Kentucky. Paul Laurence Dunbar is the first African-American poet to reach international fame and this inspired performance by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company takes his words and puts them into motion with elegance, power, and grace.

The information and activities in this resource guide have been carefully crafted to help you and your students explore the many ways a live theatre experience can open up learning opportunities. Grade level icons will help you determine which activities are good for students, too. And don't forget to take advantage of the local resources listed inside to extend the play-going experience and make even more curricular connections for you and your students. Thank you again and welcome!



**Gary Minyard**  
Vice President of  
Education & Engagement

# Curriculum Connections

You will find these icons listed in the resource guide next to the activities that indicate curricular connections. Teachers and parents are encouraged to adapt all of the activities included in an appropriate way for your students' age and abilities. HAVANA HOP fulfills the following National and Ohio State Standards and Benchmarks for grades 2-8:

## English/Language Arts Standards

- Grade 2-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.6
- Grade 3-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.6
- Grade 4-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.6
- Grade 5-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.7
- Grade 6-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7
- Grade 7-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.9
- Grade 8-** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.7

## Ohio Department of Education Drama/Theatre & Dance Standards Drama/Theatre Standards

- Grade 2-** 1CE-7CE, 1PR-3PR, 1RE-6RE
- Grade 3-** 1CE-5CE, 1PR-6PR, 1RE-5RE
- Grade 4-** 1CE-6CE, 1PR-7PR, 1RE-5RE
- Grade 5-** 1CE-5CE, 1PR-5PR, 1RE-5RE
- Grade 6-** 1CE-5CE, 2PR-5PR, 1RE-7RE
- Grade 7-** 1CE-5CE, 1PR-5PR, 1RE-7RE
- Grade 8-** 1CE-6CE, 1PR-5PR, 1RE-5RE



## National Core Arts Theatre

### Standards:

Grades 2-8:  
CREATING, PERFORMING,  
RESPONDING, CONNECTING Anchor  
Strands 1-11

### For more information on the

National Core Arts Theatre  
Standards [click here](#)

### Ohio's New Learning Standards for Social Studies

Civic Participation and Skills (Grades  
2-8)

This resource guide was created by Elaine Stoughton. All activities are available for distribution and use in the classroom or at home.

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# About the Play



Featuring Dianne McIntyre's exquisite choreography, *LYRIC FIRE: DUNBAR IN MOTION* puts into physical motion the poetry of Dayton's own Paul Laurence Dunbar, the first African-American poet to achieve international fame. Performed in period costume, the dance paints a moving and vibrant picture of the poet's life during the late 1800s. The dancers bring to life the poet himself, his creative muse, and his most loved poems, including the thought provoking "We Wear the Mask," and other favorites like "When Malindy Sings." Set to music by Scott Joplin and William Grant Still, two of America's most prized black composers, *LYRIC FIRE: DUNBAR IN MOTION* is an exquisite celebration of artistic African-American accomplishment through dance and movement.

## Spotlight on Dayton Contemporary Dance Company

Dayton is lucky to have a company like DCDC right in our own backyard! Below are just a few highlights of DCDC's rich history.

- 1968** - Dayton native and visionary pioneer Jeraldyne Blunden founded the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company
- 1973** - DCDC becomes the first African-American dance company to gain membership as a Performing Company in the Northeast Regional Ballet Association
- 1987** - DCDC becomes one of four dance companies selected to take part in the American Dance Festival program, Black Traditions in American Modern Dance
- 1994** - DCDC becomes one of six American companies (and the only one not based in New York) chosen to participate in the Biennial de la Danse in Lyon, France
- 2001** - DCDC was featured in the 2001 Emmy award-winning PBS Great Performances documentary, *Free to Dance*
- 2003** - DCDC toured 27 cities with The Flight Project, five dance works commemorating the Wright Brothers centennial of powered flight
- 2005** - DCDC performs the opening performance for Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Maya Angelo at the Schuster Center, in Dayton, Ohio
- 2007** - DCDC was featured in the PBS special *Dance in America: Dancing in the Light*
- 2012** - The film *Sparkle* premiered on PBS featuring Sheri "Sparkle" Williams celebrating 40 years with DCDC

## Ohio Spotlight

Paul Laurence Dunbar was from Dayton, Ohio. You can visit his childhood home in the West Dayton's Wright-Dunbar neighborhood at 219 N. Paul Laurence Dunbar Street. The center is open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 10am-4pm and admission is free! Visit <http://www.daytonhistory.org/destinations/paul-laurence-dunbar-house-historic-site/> or call 937-224-7061 for more information.



COMPREHENSION



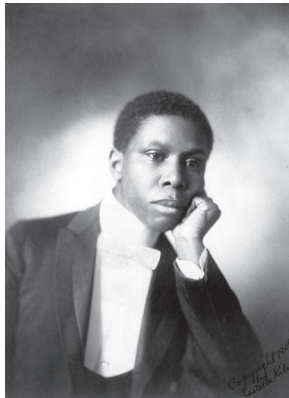


# COMPREHENSION

## Who was Paul Laurence Dunbar?

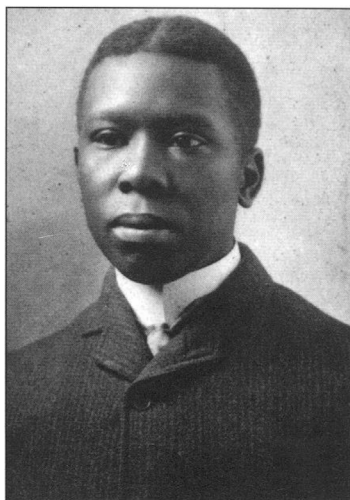
Paul Laurence Dunbar was the first African-American poet, novelist, and playwright to earn international acclaim. He was born at 311 Howard St. in Dayton, Ohio, on June 27, 1872. His parents were former slaves on a plantation in Kentucky. His father escaped from slavery before the end of the Civil War and volunteered for the 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, one of the first two black units to serve in the war.

Young Paul wrote his first poem when he was only six years old, and began public speaking at age nine. He excelled in reading and writing, and was elected President of Central High School's literary society and was editor of the school newspaper, despite being the only African-American student in the entire school. When he was 16, Dunbar's first poems were published in *The Herald* in Dayton, and *The Tattler*, Dayton's first weekly African-American newspaper. It was printed by a small company owned by two of Dunbar's high school classmates—Orville and Wilbur Wright!



In 1893, United Brethren Publishing House released Dunbar's first collection of poems, *Oak and Ivy*, half written in standard verse and half written in dialect. His poetry was very well received and he followed with his second book, *Majors and Minors*, in 1896. In addition to poetry, Dunbar also wrote short stories and other

prose, and the lyrics to the musical *In Dahomey*, the first musical written and performed entirely by African-Americans. The musical was first produced on Broadway in 1903, and was one of the more successful theatre endeavors of the time. Dunbar's essays and poems were published widely in the leading journals of the day, including *Harper's Weekly*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Denver Post*, *Current Literature* and others. During his life, commentators often noted that Dunbar appeared to be purely black African, at a time when many leading members of the African-American community were notably of mixed race, often with European ancestry.



On March 6, 1898, Paul Laurence Dunbar married Alice Ruth Moore, a teacher and poet from New Orleans. In 1900, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He died on February 9, 1906, at the age of 33. He was laid to rest at Woodland Cemetery in Dayton.

During his life, Paul Laurence Dunbar published over 400 poems, six full-length novels, plays, and short stories. He became a major inspiration for Harlem Renaissance authors like Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. His influence continues today through the writings of famous African-American writers like Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison, both of whom credit Dunbar as an inspiration.



# Pre-Show Conversation Starters



Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote both serious and humorous poems. His poetry readings were attended by white and black members of the community, even though his earliest poems celebrated and highlighted the perspective of African-Americans. After graduating he was denied the type of job he wanted—working as a law clerk—because of the color of his skin. So, he took a job as an elevator operator and continued to write poems, often selling them to the passengers on his elevator! His poems inspired a nation, notable people of both races, including William Dean Howells, Frederick Douglass, and Booker T. Washington.

As he got older, Dunbar began writing a series of newspapers articles that dealt with issues that affected African-Americans, such as higher education, poverty in the South, race riots, lynchings, and other racial injustices. These themes can be seen in many of his poems that can be found beginning on page 7 of this resource guide. While his poems were written to capture the black experience in America in the late 1800s, his talent as a poet was so great that everyone can relate to his messages.

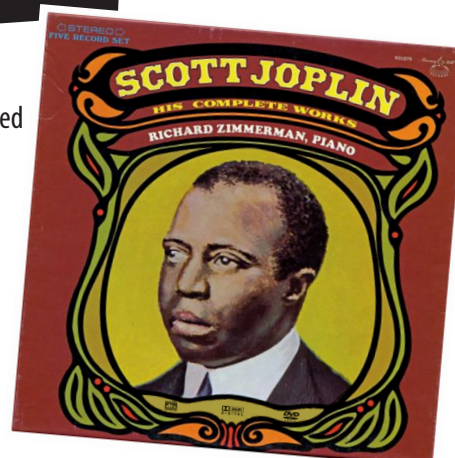
*LYRIC FIRE: DUNBAR IN MOTION* combines the groundbreaking poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar and the inventive contemporary dance of DCDC. Use the questions below to prepare your students before they attend the show at the Victoria Theatre.



1. Paul Laurence Dunbar inspired many people with his poems, often written about his own experiences as an African-American. Who do you think is an inspirational voice of your generation and why?
2. Poetry and dance are two ways a person can express themselves. How do you express your emotions and feelings?
3. How has society changed its perceptions on race since Dunbar was alive?
4. Paul Laurence Dunbar was from Dayton, Ohio. Do you think he would be proud of his city if he was alive today? Why or why not?

## The Music of Scott Joplin

**Scott Joplin** was an African-American composer and pianist. Joplin achieved fame for his ragtime compositions and was dubbed the “King of Ragtime Writers.” During his brief career, he wrote 44 original ragtime pieces, one ragtime ballet, and two operas. One of his first pieces, the *Maple Leaf Rag*, became ragtime’s first and most influential hit, and has been recognized as the archetypal rag. A “rag” is identified by its syncopated rhythm and harmonic progressions.



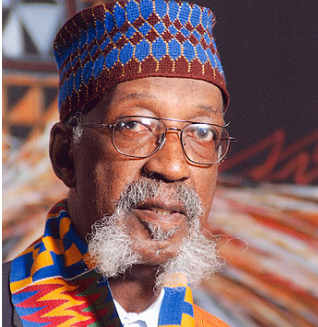
COMPREHENSION



# Gems from the Gem City



Paul Laurence Dunbar is not the only famous Daytonian. The Gem City has produced many other individuals who have made major contributions to American entertainment, politics, and innovation, and athletics.



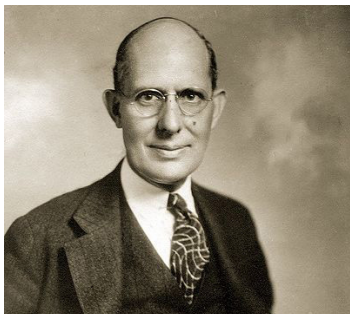
**Willis "Bing" Davis** is a contemporary visual artist and teacher. He was born in South Carolina, but grew up in Dayton and still lives here today. His art has been shown at museums all over the United States, as well as Africa and Europe. He likes to use found objects such as nuts and bolts to create pieces of art influenced by what his ancestors in Africa might have made, such as African masks or an installation of an African shrine. His gallery, EbonNia, is located at 1135 West Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.



**Edwin C. Moses** is an American former track and field athlete, who won gold medals in the 400 m hurdles at the 1976 and 1984 Olympics. Between 1977 and 1987, Moses won 107 consecutive finals (122 consecutive races) and set the world record in his event four times. In addition to his running, Moses was also an innovative reformer in the areas of Olympic eligibility and drug testing. In 2000, he was elected the first Chairman of the Laureus World Sports Academy, an international service organization of world-class athletes.



**Erma Bombeck** was an American humorist who achieved great popularity for her newspaper column that described suburban home life from the mid-1960s until the late 1990s. Bombeck also published 15 books, most of which became bestsellers. From 1965 to 1996, Erma Bombeck wrote over 4,000 newspaper columns, using broad and sometimes eloquent humor, chronicling the ordinary life of a midwestern suburban housewife. By the 1970s, her columns were read twice-weekly by 30 million readers of the 900 newspapers in the U.S. and Canada.



**Charles Kettering** Henry Ford might be recognized for inventing the car, but Charles Kettering made it infinitely easier to use. He was an American inventor, engineer, businessman, and the holder of 186 patents. He was a founder of Delco, and was head of research at General Motors from 1920 to 1947. Among his most widely used automotive developments were the electrical starting motor and leaded gasoline.



**Allison Janney** is an Actress known for her work in television, movies, and Broadway. She has six Emmy Awards for her work on *The West Wing* and other TV shows. She has also appeared in two Broadway shows, and numerous movies including *Hairspray*, *Finding Nemo*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Juno*, and *The Help*. Allison Janney graduated from The Miami Valley School in Dayton, Ohio.



**Snooky Young** Eugene Edward "Snooky" Young was a prolific jazz trumpet player. His career in music spanned from the 1930s until his death in 2011. He was a member of The Tonight Show Band from 1967-1992. He was also the 2009 recipient of the NEA Jazz Masters Award, and is considered one of the best trumpet players of all time.

CONNECTION

# A Lot Can Happen in 33 Years

SOCIAL STUDIES



Paul Laurence Dunbar lived from 1872-1906. Despite having his life cut short by sickness, many things happened in America in the 33 years he was alive. Check out the timeline below to see a few of the events that shaped pop culture, politics, and everyday life for the United States. A few might surprise you!

**1872**

**1875**- The first Kentucky Derby was held. The horse Aristides won.

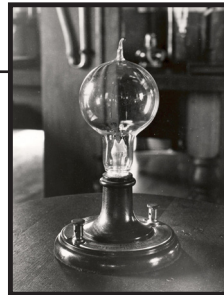


**1872**- Yellowstone National Park was established by U.S. Congress.

**1877**- The post-Civil War Reconstruction Era ended.

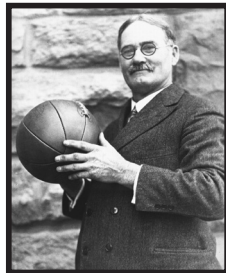
**1876**- Alexander Graham Bell created the telephone.

**1881**- James Garfield was inaugurated as the 20th President of the United States. He was assassinated after only 6 months in office.



**1879**- Thomas Edison invented the light bulb.

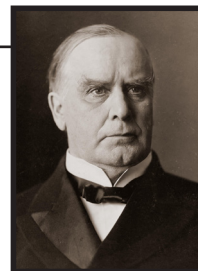
**1891**- James Naismith invented basketball.



**1889**- North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington became states.

**1896**- The Plessy v. Ferguson case upheld racial segregation under the doctrine of "separate but equal."

**1900**- US population exceeded 75 million.



**1901**- President William McKinley was assassinated.

**1903**- The first box of Crayola Crayons® was sold



**1906**- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is created by congress.

**1906**



**1905**- The Wright Brothers' third airplane (Wright Flyer III) stayed in the air for 39 minutes, marking the first flight over half an hour.

CONNECTION

# We Wear the Mask



The next several pages contain three poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Feel free to use the activities suggested, or modify them to fit your students' needs.

## We Wear the Mask

By Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1896

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
 It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--  
 This debt we pay to human guile;  
 With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
 And mouth with myriad subtleties.  
 Why should the world be over-wise,  
 In counting all our tears and sighs?  
 Nay, let them only see us, while  
 We wear the mask.  
 We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
 To thee from tortured souls arise.  
 We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
 Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
 But let the world dream otherwise,  
 We wear the mask!



<p><b>Vocabulary help</b>  <b>Guile:</b> Sly or cunning intelligence  <b>Myriad:</b> A countless high number  <b>Subtleties:</b> Changes so small or precise to articulate or describe  <b>Vile:</b> Extremely unpleasant</p>	<p><b>Interpreting <i>We Wear the Mask</i>:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think Dunbar wanted the reader to picture as they read this poem?</li> <li>• What do you think life was like for Dunbar and other African-Americans when this poem was published in 1896?</li> <li>• Count how many times Dunbar references smiling. Smiling is usually reserved for happiness, but how can it be interpreted in this poem?</li> <li>• What do you think "the mask" represents?</li> <li>• How can we apply the main themes of this poem to life in Dayton in 2016?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Reflection:</b>          Do you ever feel like you are wearing a mask? How does that make you feel? How does wearing a mask affect your relationships with other people?</p>	

Dunbar, Paul Laurence, "We Wear the Mask" (1896). *Dunbar Music Archive*. Paper 169. <http://ecommons.udayton.edu/dunbar/169>



# The Poet and His Song



## **The Poet and His Song**

By Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1896

A song is but a little thing,  
And yet what joy it is to sing!  
In hours of toil it gives me zest,  
And when at eve I long for rest;  
When cows come home along the bars,  
And in the fold I hear the bell,  
As Night, the shepherd, herds his stars,  
I sing my song, and all is well.  
There are no ears to hear my lays,  
No lips to lift a word of praise;  
But still, with faith unflinching,  
I live and laugh and love and sing.  
What matters you unheeding through?  
They cannot feel my spirit's spell,  
Since life is sweet and love is long,  
I sing my song, and all is well.  
My days are never days of ease;  
I till my ground and prune my trees.  
When ripened gold is all the plain,  
I put my sickle to the grain.  
I labor hard, and toil and sweat,  
While others dream within the dell;  
But even while my brow is wet,  
I sing my song, and all is well.  
Sometimes the sun, unkindly hot,  
My garden makes a desert spot;  
Sometimes a blight upon the tree  
Takes all my fruit away from me;  
And then with throes of bitter pain  
Rebellious passions rise and swell;  
But—life is more than fruit or grain,  
And so I sing, and all is well.

### **Vocabulary help**

**Blight:** A disease  
**Dell:** A small valley, usually among trees  
**Prune:** To trim away or cut back  
**Throes:** Intense or violent pain or struggle  
**Throng:** A large, densely packed crowd  
**Toil:** To work extremely hard  
**Unflinching:** Steady and resolute  
**Unheeding:** Without paying attention  
**Zest:** Great enthusiasm and energy

### **Interpreting *The Poet and His Song*:**

- What can the reader learn about Paul Laurence Dunbar and this period of American history through reading this poem?
- What emotions do you think Dunbar was feeling when he wrote this poem?
- Identify the metaphors and extended metaphors in this poem, and write them down. By using metaphor what is Dunbar able to accomplish?

### **Personal Reflection:**

Free write a list of occupations that make tangible products. Then, write a poem of your own similar to *The Poet and His Song*. Your poem does not have to rhyme or follow a strict meter, but should contain a metaphor. In poetry, metaphors are the most effective way to make comparisons and engage your reader.



Dunbar, Paul Laurence, "The Poet and His Song" (1896). *Dunbar Music Archive*. Paper 250.  
<http://ecommons.udayton.edu/dunbar/250>

# When Malindy Sings

## When Malindy Sings

By Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1903

G'way an' quit dat noise, Miss

Lucy—

Put dat music book away;  
What's de use to keep on tryin'?  
Ef you practise twell you're gray,  
You cain't sta't no notes a-flyin'  
Lak de ones dat rants and rings  
F'om de kitchen to de big woods  
When Malindy sings.

You ain't got de nachel o'gans  
Fu' to make de soun' come right,  
You ain't got de tu'ns an' twistin's  
Fu' to make it sweet an' light.

Tell you one thing now, Miss Lucy,  
An' I'm tellin' you fu' true,  
When hit comes to raal right  
singin',  
'T ain't no easy thing to do.

Easy'nough fu' folks to hollah,  
Lookin' at de lines an' dots,  
When dey ain't no one kin sence it,  
An' de chune comes in, in spots;  
But fu' real malojous music,  
Dat jes' strikes yo' hea't and clings,  
Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me  
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah hyeahd Malindy?  
Blessed soul, tek up de cross!  
Look hyeah, ain't you jokin', honey?  
Well, you don't know what you los'.  
Y' ought to hyeah dat gal a-wa'blin',  
Robins, la'ks, an' all dem things,  
Heish dey moufs an' hides dey face.  
When Malindy sings.

Fiddlin' man jes' stop his fiddlin',  
Lay his fiddle on de she'f;  
Mockin'-bird quit tryin' to whistle,

'Cause he jes' so shamed hisse'f.  
Folks a-playin' on de banjo  
Draps dey fingahs on de strings--  
Bless yo' soul--fu'gits to move 'em,  
When Malindy sings.  
She jes' spreads huh mouf and  
hollahs,  
"Come to Jesus," twell you hyeah  
Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and voices,  
Timid-lak a-drawin' neah;  
Den she tu'ns to "Rock of Ages,"  
Simply to de cross she clings,  
An' you fin' yo' teahs a-drappin'  
When Malindy sings.

Who dat says dat humble praises  
Wif de Master nevah counts?  
Heish yo' mouf, I hyeah dat music,  
Ez hit rises up an' mounts--  
Floatin' by de hills an' valleys,  
Way above dis buryin' sod,  
Ez hit makes its way in glory  
To de very gates of God!

Oh, hit's sweetah dan de music  
Of an edicated band;  
An' hit's dearah dan de battle's  
Song o' triumph in de lan'.  
It seems holier dan evenin'  
When de solemn chu'ch bell rings,  
Ez I sit an' ca'mly listen  
While Malindy sings.

Towsah, stop dat ba'kin', hyeah me!  
Mandy, mek dat chile keep still;  
Don't you hyeah de echoes callin'  
F'om de valley to de hill?  
Let me listen, I can hyeah it,  
Th'oo de bresh of angel's wings,  
Sof' an' sweet, "Swing Low,  
Sweet Chariot,"  
Ez Malindy sings

ENGLISH/  
LANGUAGE  
ARTS

ARTS

All  
GRADES

### Interpreting *When Malindy Sings*:

This poem is considered a "dialect poem." This style of poetry was popularized in the 1700s by Scottish poet, Robert Burns. In the early 1900s, American dialect poetry was often written in Irish, Southern, or African American dialects. These poems were usually read aloud or performed for entertainment. Today you might think that these poems were meant to degrade their subjects, but dialect poems were generally not intended to be offensive at the time. After reading this poem, divide students into groups and assign each group to one section of the poem. Then, "translate" the poem into standard English.

- Who are the main characters in this poem?
- Based on the characters, who can we assume is the narrator of this poem?
- Dialect poetry was meant to entertain, but what message do you think Paul Laurence Dunbar was trying to convey to the reader?

### Personal Reflection:

Rewrite your poem from *The Poet and His Song* exercise on the previous page using dialect you hear in your house or neighborhood. This can include the way you talk to your friends online.



CREATIVITY

<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/when-malindy-sings>

VICTORIA THEATRE ASSOCIATION 2015-2016 Season

Resource Guide 9

# He Had His Dream

ENGLISH/  
LANGUAGE  
ARTS

ARTS

All  
GRADES

## *He Had His Dream*

By Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1896

He had his dream, and all through life,  
Worked up to it through toil and strife.  
Afloat fore'er before his eyes,  
It colored for him all his skies:  
The storm-cloud dark  
Above his bark,  
The calm and listless vault of blue  
Took on its hopeful hue,  
It tintured every passing beam--  
He had his dream.

He labored hard and failed at last,  
His sails too weak to bear the blast,  
The raging tempests tore away  
And sent his beating bark astray.  
But what cared he  
For wind or sea!  
He said, "The tempest will be short,  
My bark will come to port."  
He saw through every cloud a gleam--  
He had his dream.

### Vocabulary help

**Toil:** To work extremely hard

**Strife:** Angry or bitter conflict

**Listless:** Lacking energy or enthusiasm

**Tintured:** Tainted with a small amount of something

**Tempest:** A violent and windy storm at sea

### Interpreting *He Had His Dream*:

- What do you think the tone or mood is in this poem?
- Do you think Paul Laurence Dunbar is writing about himself? If not, who might he be writing about?
- What does the tempest represent?
- What do you think the "dream" could be in this poem?

### Personal Reflection:

What is your biggest dream in life? As you have learned from this resource guide, many students from Dayton just like you had big dreams—to be inventors, actors, writers, and athletes—and they achieved them! What can you do right now to work towards your goals?



Dunbar, Paul Laurence, "He Had His Dream" (1896). *Dunbar Music Archive*. Paper 139. <http://ecommons.udayton.edu/dunbar/139>

VICTORIA THEATRE ASSOCIATION 2015-2016 Season

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# Spoken Word



Poetry is a way of expressing yourself, but it doesn't have to be written down. Some poetry is meant to be performed out loud.

**Spoken word** is performance-based poetry that focuses on the aesthetics of word play and story-telling, that originated from the poetry of African-Americans in Harlem. It often includes collaboration and experimentation with other art forms such as music, theatre, and dance. There are no set rules on how to write or perform spoken word—except to speak it out loud! Spoken word usually focuses on the performance of the words themselves, the dynamics of tone, gestures, facial expressions, and more. Performers can weave in poetic components - such as rhyme, repetition, slang, improvisation, and many more elements of poetry - to create an atmosphere for the audience to experience.

Here are some tips from [Powerpoetry.org](http://Powerpoetry.org) to get started writing a spoken word piece of your own:

- 1. Choose a subject and have attitude.** No attitude, no poem! Feelings and opinions give poetry its richness. Each poet has a unique perspective and view of the world that no one else has. It is important that a spoken word poem displays the courage necessary to your inner thoughts and feelings with the rest of the world. What you have to say is important, so don't be shy!
- 2. Pick your poetic devices.** Poems that get attention are ones that incorporate simple, but powerful poetic elements. Repetition is a device that can help a writer generate exciting poems with just repeating a key phrase or image. Rhyming can enrich your diction and performance as well. And don't forget about similes and metaphors!
- 3. Performing your poem.** Spoken word poems are written to be performed. After your poem is written, practice performing the poem with the elements of good stage presence in mind. Here are the main keys to consider:
  - Eye Contact— Look into the eyes of people in the audience to capture their attention.
  - Projection— Remember to speak loudly and clearly so that your voice can be heard from a distance.
  - Enunciation— Speak clearly and distinctly so that the audience can understand what you are saying.
  - Facial Expressions— Your facial expressions give clues to the tone of the poem. If your spoken word piece is happy, then you should look happy. However, if your poem expresses anger then facial expressions and body language can drive that emotional connection.
  - Gestures— Movement and gestures go along with facial expressions in communicating the tone of your poem. They can also be used to emphasize different elements of your performance.
- 4. Memorization.** Once you've memorized your spoken word piece, you can devote more time to your performance. Memorization allows you to be truly in touch with the meaning and the emotional content of your poem.

For more spoken word check out these ten spoken word performances from Ted Talks all over the world.

[\(http://blog.ted.com/10-spoken-word-performances-folded-like-lyrical-origami/\)](http://blog.ted.com/10-spoken-word-performances-folded-like-lyrical-origami/)



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# Resources for Students & Adults

## Books for students:

*The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, Written by Paul Laurence Dunbar. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2012.

*Jump Back, Paul: The Life and Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, Written by Sally Derby. Candlewick Books: 2015.

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Written by Maya Angelou with a foreword by Oprah Winfrey. Ballantine Books: 2009.

*Poetry for Young People: Maya Angelou*. Edited by Edwin Graves Wilson and Illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue. Sterling Children's Books: 2013.

## Publications for Teachers and Parents:

*Organic Creativity in the Classroom: Teaching to Intuition in Academics and the Arts*, Written by Jane Piirto. Prufrock Press: 2013.

*Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom*, Edited by Ronald A. Beghetto and James C. Kaufman. Cambridge University Press: 2010.

*Signs of Change: New Directions in Theatre Education*, Written by Joan Lazarus. Intellect Ltd; Revised and Amplified Edition: 2012.

*Theatre for Change: Education, Social Action, and Therapy*, Written by Robert Landy and David T. Montgomery. Palgrave Macmillan: 2012.

*Play: How it Shapes the Brain and Invigorates the Soul*, Written by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughn. Harvard University Press: 2009.

## Websites:

<http://www.powerpoetry.org/>: Students can find inspiration to write poems and spoken word pieces of their very own, plus find spoken word slams in which to participate. There is also information here on how to apply for college scholarships directly related to the written word.

<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/paul-laurence-dunbar>: Learn more about Dunbar's life, and explore all of his poems and other published works. There are plenty of exercises to help students improve their writing and analysis skills.

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>: The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience.

<https://www.victoriatheatre.com/education-engagement/about-education/> During the 2014-2015 Season, the Education & Engagement Department at Victoria Theatre Association hosted over 200 events and worked with over 100,000 members of the Dayton community. That's a lot! Stay up-to-date on exciting information like Summer Camps, Free Master Classes, Adult Education Opportunities, Backstage Tours, and more!

## Victoria Fuse's Local Resource Discovery



Did you know for the past two springs, the Dayton Human Relations Council has hosted a spoken word grand slam featuring Dayton students? Last year's event **SPEAK. BE HEARD. BE CONSIDERED.** was held at the Victoria Theatre and featured high school students from all over the Miami Valley. Participants got to perform along side **Metaphorically Speaking**, Dayton's premier spoken word group. For more information on the 2016 HRC Poetry Grand Slam, keep an eye on <http://daytonhrc.org/>. You can also check out **Metaphorically Speaking** events by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/metaphoricallyspeakingdayton>.

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RELATIONS  
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Many voices.  
One city.

RESOURCES

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138 North Main Street  
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The Education & Engagement programs of Victoria Theatre Association are made possible through the support and commitment of The Frank M. Tait Foundation and the following sponsors and donors whose generosity have opened the door of live theatre to the students of the Miami Valley:

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*LYRIC FIRE: DUNBAR IN MOTION* is produced by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. Rooted in the African-American experience, the DCDC is a culturally diverse contemporary dance company committed to reaching the broadest audience through exceptional performance and arts-integrated education.



**HAPPY 150<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY  
VICTORIA THEATRE!**

Did you know that on January 1, 2016, The Victoria Theatre turned 150! All year long we are celebrating and we need your help! We are collecting stories from patrons about how attending shows at the Victoria Theatre impacted their lives. If you've been inspired by a Discovery Performance over the years, we want to hear it! Please contact Elaine Stoughton at 937-228-7591, ext. 3039 for information on how to share your story!

**DON'T FORGET**

All schools that receive scholarships for a show and/or transportation are asked and encouraged to create thank-you letters or cards for our sponsors. Please address your students' thank-you notes to:

DISCOVERY Sponsors  
c/o Victoria Theatre Association  
138 North Main Street  
Dayton, OH 45402

