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When Malindy Sings

Paul Laurence Dunbar

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'Long To'ds Night

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1903

When Malindy Sings

G'way an' quit dat noise, Miss Lucy—

Put dat music book away;

What's de use to keep on tryin'?

Ef you practice twell you're gray,

You cain't sta't no notes a-flyin'

Lak de ones dat rants an' rings

F'om de kitchen to de big woods

When Melindy 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',

'Tain'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 melojous music,
Dat jes' strikes yo' hawt and clings,
Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah heerd Malindy?
Blessed soul, take up de cross!
Look heah, ain't you jokin' honey?
Well, you don't know whut you los'.
Y'ought to heah dat gal a-wa'blin',
Robins, la'ks, an' all dem things,
Heish dey moufs an' hides dey faces
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 heah

Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and voices,

Timid-like 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 heah 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, hits sweetah dan de music
Of an edicated band;
An' hits 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', heah me!
Mandy, make dat chile keep still;

Don't you heah de echoes callin'

F'om de valley to de hill.

Let me listen, I can heah it,

Th'oo de bresh of angel's wings,

Sof' an' sweet, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,"

Ez Malindy sings.

Drizzle

Hit's been drizzlin' an' been sprinklin',

Kin' o' techy all day long.

I ain't wet enough fu' toddy,

I's too damp to raise a song,

An' de case have set me t'inkin',

Dat dey's folk des lak de rain,

Dat goes drizzlin' w'en dey's talkin',

An' won't speak out flat an' plain.

Ain't you nevah set an' listened

At a body 'splain his min'?

W'en de t'oughts dey keep on drappin'

Was n't big enough to fin'?

Dem's whut I call drizzlin' people,

Othahs call 'em mealy mouf,

But de fust name hits me bettah,

Case dey nevah tech a drouf.

Dey kin talk from hyeah to yandah,
An' f'om yandah hyeah ergain,
An' dey don' mek no mo' 'pression,
Den dis powd'ry kin' o' rain.
En yo' min' is dry ez cindahs,
Er a piece o' kindlin' wood,
'T ain't no use a-talkin' to 'em,
Fu' dey drizzle ain't no good.

Gimme folks dat speak out nachul,
Whut 'll say des whut dey mean,
Whut don't set dey wo'ds so skimpy
Dat you got to guess between.
I want talk des' lak de showahs
Whut kin wash de dust erway,
Not dat sprinklin' convusation,
Dat des drizzle all de day.

Two Little Boots

Two little boots all rough an' wo',

Two little boots!

Laws, I's kissed 'em times befo',

Dese little boots!

Seems de toes a-peepin' thoo

Dis hyeah hole an' sayin' "Boo!"

Evah time dey looks at you—

Dese little boots.

Membah de time he put 'em on,

Dese little boots;

Riz an' called fu' 'em by dawn,

Dese little boots;

Den he tromped de livelong day,

Laffin' in his happy way,

Evaht'ing he had to say,

"My little boots!"

Kickin' de san' de whole day long,

Dem little boots;

Good de cobblah made 'em strong,

Dem little boots!

Rocks was fu' dat baby's use,

I'on had to stan' abuse

W'en you tu'ned dese champeens loose

Dese little boots!

Ust to make de ol' cat cry,

Dese little boots;

Den you walked it mighty high,

Proud little boots!

Ahms akimbo, stan'in' wide,

Eyes a-sayin' "Dis is pride!"

Den de manny-baby stride!

You little boots.

Somehow, you don' seem so gay,

Po' little boots,

Sence yo' ownah went erway,

Po' little boots!

Yo' bright tops don' look so red,

Dese brass tips is dull an' dead;

"Goo'-by," whut de baby said;

Deah little boots!

Ain't you kin' o' sad yo'se'f,

You little boots?

Dis is all his mammy's lef',

Two little boots.

Sence huh baby gone an' died,

Heav'n itse'f hit seem to hide

Des a little bit inside

Two little boots.

The Looking-Glass

Dinah stan' befo' de glass,

Lookin' moughty neat,

An' huh purty shadder sass

At huh haid an' feet.

While she sashay 'roun' n' bow,

Smilin' den an' poutin' now,

An' de lookin'-glass, I 'low

Say: "Now, ain't she sweet?"

All she do, de glass it see,

Hit des see, no mo',

Seems to me, hit ought to be

Drappin' on de flo'.

She go w'en huh time git slack,

Kissin' han's an' smilin' back,

Lawsy, how my lips go smack,

Watchin' at de do'.

Wisht I was huh lookin'-glass,

W'en she kissed huh han';

Does you t'ink I'd let it pass,

Settin' on de stan'?

No; I'd des' fall down an' break,

Kin' o' glad 't uz fu' huh sake;

But de diffunce, dat whut make

Lookin'-glass an' man.

The Colored Band

W'en de colo'ed ban' comes ma'chin' down de street,

Don't you people stan' daih starin'; lif' yo' feet!

Ain't dey playin'? Hip, hooray!

Stir yo' stumps an' cleah de way,

Fu' de music dat dey mekin' can't be beat.

Oh, de major man's a-swingin' of his stick,

An' de pickaninnies crowdin' roun' him thick;

In his go'geous uniform,

He's de lightnin' of de sto'm,

An' de little clouds erroun' look mighty slick.

You kin hyeah a fine perfo'mance w'en de white ban's serenade,

An' dey play dey high-toned music mighty sweet,

But hit's Sousa played in rag-time, an' hit's Rastus on Parade,

W'en de colo'ed ban' comes ma'chin' down de street.

W'en de colo'ed ban' comes ma'chin' down de street

You kin hyeah de ladies all erroun' repeat:

"Ain't dey handsome? Ain't dey gran'?

Ain't dey splendid? Goodness, lan'!

W'y dey's pu'fect f'om dey fo'heads to dey feet!

An' sich steppin' to de music down de line,

'T ain't de music by itself dat meks it fine,

Hit's de walkin', step by step,

An' de keepin' time wid "Hep,"

Dat it mek a common ditty soun' divine.

Oh, de white ban' play hits music, an' hit's mighty good to hyeah,

An' it sometimes leaves a ticklin' in yo' feet;

But de hea't goes into bus'ness fu' to he'p erlong de eah,

W'en de colo'ed ban' goes marchin' down de street.

The Memory of Martha

Out in de night a sad bird moans,

An', oh, but hit's moughty lonely;

Times I kin sing, but mos' I groans,

Fu' oh, but hit's moughty lonely!

Is you sleepin' well dis evenin', Marfy, deah?

W'en I calls you f'om de cabin, kin you hyeah?

'T ain't de same ol' place to me,

Nuffin' 's lak hit used to be,

W'en I knowed dat you was allus some'ers near.

Down by the road de shadders grows,

An', oh, but hit's moughty lonely;

Seem lak de ve'y moonlight knows,

An', oh, but hit's moughty lonely!

Does you know, I's cryin' fu' you, oh, my wife?

Does you know dey ain't no joy no mo' in life?

An' my only t'ought is dis,

Dat I's honin' fu' de bliss

Fu' to quit dis groun' o' worriment an' strife.

Dah on de baid my banjo lays,

An', oh, but hit's moughty lonely;

Can't even sta't a chune o' praise,

An', oh, but hit's moughty lonely!

Oh, hit's moughty slow a-waitin' hyeah below.

Is you watchin' fu' me, Marfy, at de do'?

Ef you is, in spite o' sin,

Dey'll be sho' to let me in,

W'en dey sees yo' face a-shinin', den dey 'll know.

Spring Fever

Grass commence a-comin'

Thoo de thawin' groun',

Evah bird dat whistles

Keepin' noise erroun';

Cain't sleep in de mo'nin',

Case befo' it's light

Bluebird an' de robin

Done begun to fight.

Bluebird sass de robin,

Robin sass him back,

Den de bluebird scol' him

'Twell his face is black.

Would n' min' de quoilin'

All de mo'nin' long,

'Cept it wakes me early,

Case hit's done in song.

Anybody wo'kin'
Wants to sleep ez late
Ez de folks'll 'low him,
An' I wish to state
(Co'se dis ain't to scattah,
But 'twix' me an' you),
I could stan' de bedclothes,
Kin' o' latah, too.

'T ain't my natchul feelin',
Dis hyeah mopin' spell.
I stan's early risin'
Mos'ly moughty well;
But de ve'y minute,
I feel Ap'il's heat,
Bless yo' soul, de bedclothes
Nevah seemed so sweet.

Mastah, he's a-scol'in',

Case de han's is slow,

All de hosses balkin',

Jes' cain't mek 'em go.

Don' know whut's de mattah,

Hit's a funny t'ing,

I ess'n hit's de fevah

Dat you gits in de spring.

The Tryst

De night creep down erlong de lan',

De shadders rise an' shake,

De frog is sta'tin' up his ban',

De cricket is awake;

My wo'k is mos' nigh done, Celes',

To-night I won't be late,

I's hu'yin' thoo my level bes',

Wait fu' me by de gate.

De mockin'-bird 'll sen' his glee

A-thrillin' thoo and thoo,

I know dat ol' magnolia-tree

Is smellin' des' fu' you;

De jessamine erside de road

Is bloomin' rich an' white,

My hea't's a-th'obbin' 'cause it knowed

You 'd wait fu' me to-night.

Hit 's lonesome, ain't it, stan'in' thaih

Wid no one nigh to talk?

But ain't dey whispahs in de aih

Erlong de gyahden walk?

Don't somep'n kin' o' call my name,

An' say "he love you bes" ?

Hit's true, I wants to say de same,

So wait fu' me, Celes'.

Sing somep'n fu' to pass de time,

Outsing de mockin'-bird,

You got de music an' de rhyme,

You beat him wid de word.

I's comin' now, my wo'k is done,

De hour has come fu' res',

I wants to fly, but only run—

Wait fu' me, deah Celes'.

Itching Heels

Fu' de peace o' my eachin' heels, set down;

Don' fiddle dat chune no mo'.

Don' you see how dat melody stuhs me up

An' baigs me to tek to de flo'?

You knows I's a Christian, good an' strong;

I wusship f'om June to June;

My pra'ahs dey ah loud an' hymns ah long:

I baig you don' fiddle dat chune.

I's a crick in my back an' a misery hyeah

Whaih de j'int's gittin ol' an' stiff,

But hit seems lak you brings me de bref o' my youf;

W'y, I's suttain I noticed a w'iff.

Don' fiddle dat chune no mo', my chile,

Don' fiddle dat chune no mo';

I'll git up an' taih up dis groun' fu' a mile,

An' den I'll be chu'ched fu' it, sho'.

Oh, fiddle dat chune some mo', I say,

An' fiddle it loud an' fas':

I's a youngstah ergin in de mi'st o' my sin;

De p'esent's gone back to de pas'.

I'll dance to dat chune, so des fiddle erway;

I knows how de backslidah feels;

So fiddle it on 'twell de break o' de day

Fu' de sake o' my eachin' heels.

The Boogah Man

W'en de evenin' shadders

Come a-glidin' down,

Fallin' black an' heavy

Ovah hill an' town,

Ef you listen keerful,

Keerful ez you kin,

So's you boun' to notice

Des a drappin' pin;

Den you'll hyeah a funny

Soun' ercross de lan';

Lay low; dat's de callin'

Of de Boogah Man!

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

Hyeah him ez he go erlong de way;

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

Don' you wish de night 'ud tu'n to day?

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

Hide yo' little peepers 'hind yo' han';

Woo-oo, woo-oo!

Callin' of de Boogah Man.

W'en de win 's a-shiverin'

Thoo de gloomy lane,

An' dey comes de patterin'

Of de evenin' rain,

W'en de owl's a-hootin',

Out daih in de wood,

Don' you wish, my honey,

Dat you had been good?

'T ain't no use to try to

Snuggle up to Dan;

Bless you, dat 's de callin'

Of de Boogah Man!

Ef you loves yo' mammy,

An' you min's yo' pap,
Ef you nevah wriggles
Outen Sukey's lap;
Ef you says yo' "Lay me"
Evah single night
'Fo' dey tucks de kivers
An' puts out de light,
Den de rain kin pattah,
Win' blow lak a fan,
But you need n' bothah
'Bout de Boogah Man!

A Plantation Portrait

Hain't you see my Mandy Lou,

Is it true?

Whaih you been f'om day to day,

Whaih, I say?

Dat you say you nevah seen

Dis hyeah queen

Walkin' roun' f'om fiel' to street

Smilin' sweet?

Slendah ez a saplin' tree;

Seems to me

W'en de win' blow f'om de bay

She jes' sway

Lak de reg'lar saplin' do

Ef hit's grew

Straight an' graceful, 'dout a limb,

Sweet an' slim.

Browner den de frush's wing,

An' she sing

Lak he mek his wa'ble ring

In de spring;

But she sholy beat de frush,

Hyeah me, hush:

W'en she sing, huh teef kin show

White ez snow.

Eyes ez big an' roun' an' bright

Ez de light

Whut de moon gives in de prime

Harvest time.

An' huh haih a wooly skein,

Black an' plain.

Hol's you wid a natchul twis'

Close to bliss.

Tendah han's dat mek yo' own

Feel lak stone;

Easy steppin', blessid feet,

Small an' sweet.

Hain't you seen my Mandy Lou,

Is it true?

Look at huh befo' she's gone,

Den pass on!

Howdy Honey Howdy

Do' a-stan'in' on a jar, fiah a-shinin' thoo,
Ol' folks drowsin' 'roun' de place, wide awake is Lou,
W'en I tap, she answah, an' I see huh 'mence to grin,
"Howdy, honey, howdy, won't you step right in?"

Den I step erpon de log layin' at de do',
Bless de Lawd, huh mammy an' huh pap's done 'menced to sno',
Now's de time, if evah, ef I's gwine to try an' win,
"Howdy, honey, howdy, won't you step right in?"

No use playin' on de aidge, trimblin' on de brink,
W'en a body love a gal, tell huh whut he t'ink;
W'en huh hea't is open fu' de love you gwine to gin,
Pull yo'se'f togethah, suh, an' step right in.

Sweetes' imbitation dat a body evah hyeahed,
Sweetah den de music of a love-sick mockin'-bird,

Comin' f'om de gal you loves bettah den yo' kin,

"Howdy, honey, howdy, won't you step right in?"

At de gate o' heaven w'en de sto'm o' life is pas',

'Spec' I'll be a-stan'in', 'twell de Mastah say at las',

"Hyeah he stan' all weary, but he winned his fight wid sin.

Howdy, honey, howdy, won't you step right in? "

Noddin' by de Fire

Some folks t'inks hit's right an' p'opah,

Soon ez bedtime come erroun',

Fu' to scramble to de kiver,

Lak dey'd hyeahed de trumpet soun'.

But dese people dey all misses

Whut I mos'ly does desiah;

Dat's de settin' roun' an' dozin',

An' a-noddin' by de fiah.

When you's tiahed out a-hoein',

Er a-followin' de plough,

Whut's de use of des a-fallin'

On yo' pallet lak a cow?

W'y, de fun is all in waitin'

In de face of all de tiah,

An' a-dozin' and a-drowsin'

By a good ol' hick'ry fiah.

Oh, you grunts an' groans an' mumbles

Case yo' bones is full o' col',

Dough you feels de joy a-tricklin'

Roun' de co'nahs of yo' soul.

An' you 'low anothah minute

'S sho to git you wa'm an' dryah,

W'en you set up pas' yo' bedtime,

Case you hates to leave de fiah.

Whut's de use o' downright sleepin'?

You can't feel it while it las',

An' you git up feelin' sorry

W'en de time fu' it has pas'.

Seem to me dat time too precious,

An' de houahs too short entiah,

Fu' to sleep, w'en you could spen' 'em

Des a-noddin' by de fiah.

A Warm Day in Winter

"Sunshine on de medders,
Greenness on de way;
Dat's de blessed reason
I sing all de day."

Look hyeah! Whut you axin'?
Whut meks me so merry?
'Spect to see me sighin'
W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary?

'Long de stake an' rider
Seen a robin set;
W'y, hit 'mence a-thawin',
Groun' is monst'ous wet.
Den you stan' dah wond'rin',
Lookin' skeert an' stary;
I's a right to caper

W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary.

Missis gone a-drivin',

Mastah gone to shoot;

Ev'ry da'ky lazin'

In de sun to boot.

Qua'tah 's moughty pleasant,

Hangin' 'roun ' my Mary;

Cou'tin' boun' to prospah

W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary.

Cidah look so pu'ty

Po'in' f'om de jug —

Don' you see it's happy?

Hyeah it laffin' — glug?

Now's de time fu' people

Fu' to try an' bury

All dey grief an' sorrer,

W'en hit's wa'm in Febawary.

The Visitor

Little lady at de do',
W'y you stan' dey knockin'?
Nevah seen you ac' befo'
In er way so shockin'.
Don' you know de sin it is
Fu' to git my temper riz
W'en I's got de rheumatiz
An' my jints is lockin'?

No, ol' Miss ain't sont you down,
Don' you tell no story;
I been seed you hangin' 'roun'
Dis hyeah te'itory.
You des come fu' me to tell
You a tale, an' I ain'—well—
Look hyeah, what is dat I smell?
Steamin' victuals? Glory!

Come in, Missy, how you do?

Come up by de fiah,

I was jokin', chile, wid you;

Bring dat basket nighah.

Huh uh, ain' dat lak ol' Miss,

Sen'in' me a feas' lak dis?

Rheumatiz cain't stop my bliss,

Case I's feelin' spryah.

Chicken meat an' gravy, too,

Hot an' still a-heatin';

Good ol' sweet pertater stew;

Missy b'lieves in treatin'.

Des set down, you blessed chile,

Daddy got to t'ink a while,

Den a story mek you smile

W'en he git thoo eatin'.

My Sweet Brown Gal

W'en de clouds is hangin' heavy in de sky,
An' de win's 's a-taihin' moughty vig'rous by,
I don' go a-sighin' all erlong de way;
I des' wo'k a-waitin' fu' de close o' day.

Case I knows w'en evenin' draps huh shadders down,
I won' care a smidgeon fu' de weathah's frown;
Let de rain go splashin', let de thundah raih,
Dey's a happy sheltah, an' I's goin' daih.

Down in my ol' cabin wa'm ez mammy's toas',
'Taters in de fiah layin' daih to roas';
No one daih to cross me, got no talkin' pal
But I's got de comp'ny o' my sweet brown gal.

So I spen's my evenin' listenin' to huh sing,
Lak a blessid angel; how huh voice do ring!

Sweetah den a bluebird flutterin' erroun',
W'en he sees de steamin' o' de new ploughed groun'.

Den I hugs huh closah, closah to my breas'.

Need n't sing, my da'lin', tek you' hones' res'.

Does I mean Malindy, Mandy, Lize er Sal?

No, I means my fiddle—dat's my sweet brown gal!

In the Morning

'Lias! 'Lias! Bless de Lawd!

Don' you know de day's erbroad?

Ef you don' git up, you scamp,

Dey'll be trouble in dis camp.

T'ink I gwine to let you sleep

W'ile I meks yo' boa'd an' keep?

Dat's a putty howdy-do—

Don' you hyeah me, 'Lias—you?

Bet ef I come crost dis flo'

You won' fin' no time to sno'.

Daylight all a-shinin' in

W'ile you sleep—w'y hit's a sin!

Ain't de can'le-light enough

To bu'n out widout a snuff,

But you go de mo'nin' thoo

Bu'nin' up de daylight too?

'Lias, don' you hyeah me call?
No use tu'nin' to'ds de wall;
I kin hyeah dat mattuss squeak;
Don' you hyeah me w'en I speak?
Dis hyeah clock done struck off six—
Ca'line, bring me dem ah sticks!
Oh, you down, suh; huh! You down—
Look hyeah, don' you daih to frown.

Ma'ch yo'se'f an' wash yo' face,
Don' you splattah all de place;
I got somep'n else to do,
'Sides jes' cleanin' aftah you.
Tek dat comb an' fix yo' haid—
Looks jes' lak a feddah baid.
Look hyeah, boy, I let you see
You sha'n't roll yo' eyes at me.

Come hyeah; bring me dat ah strap!

Boy, I'll whup you 'twell you drap;

You done felt yo'se'f too strong,

An' you sholy got me wrong.

Set down at dat table thaih;

Jes' you whimpah ef you daih!

Evah mo'nin' on dis place,

Seem lak I mus' lose my grace.

Fol' yo' han's an' bow yo' haid—

Wait ontwell de blessin' 's said;

"Lawd, have mussy on ouah souls—"

(Don' you daih to tech dem rolls—)

"Bless de food we gwine to eat—"

(You set still—I *see* yo' feet;

You jes' try dat trick agin!)

"Gin us peace an' joy. Amen!"

To the Eastern Shore

I's feelin' kin' o' lonesome in my little room to-night,
An' my min's done los' de minutes an' de miles,
W'ile it teks me back a-flyin'to de country of delight,
Whaih de Chesapeake goes grumblin' er wid smiles.
Oh, de ol' plantation's callin' to me, Come, come back,
Hyeah's de place fu' you to labouh an' to res',
Fu' my sandy roads is gleamin' w'ile de city ways is black;
Come back, honey, case yo' country home is bes'.

I know de moon is shinin' down erpon de Eastern sho',
An' de bay's a-sayin' "Howdy" to de lan';
An' de folks is all a-settin' out erroun' de cabin do',
Wid dey feet a-restin' in de silvah san';
An' de ol' plantation's callin' to me, Come, oh, come,
F'om de life dat's des' a-whaihin' you erway,
F'om de trouble an' de bustle, an' de agernizin' hum
Dat de city keeps ergoin' all de day.

I's tired of de city, tek me back to Sandy Side,
Whaih de po'est ones kin live an' play an' eat;
Whaih we draws a simple livin' f'om de fo'est an' de tide,
An' de days ah faih, an' evah night is sweet.
Fu' de ol' plantaion's callin' to me, Come, oh, come.
An' de Chesapeake's a-sayin' "Dat 's de t'ing,"
W'ile my little cabin beckons, dough his mouf is closed an' dumb,
I's a-comin', an' my hea't begins to sing.

Wadin' in de Crick

Days git wa'm an' wa'mah,
School gits mighty dull,
Seems lak dese hyeah teachahs

Mus' feel mussiful.

Hookey's wrong, I know it

Ain't no gent'man's trick;

But de aihs a-callin',

"Come on to de crick."

Dah de watah's gu'glin'

Ovah shiny stones,

Des hit's ve'y singin'

Seems to soothe yo' bones.

W'at's de use o' waitin',

Go on good an' quick:

Dain't no fun lak dis hyeah

Wadin' in de crick.

W'at dat jay-bu'd sayin'?

Bettah shet yo' haid,

Fus' t'ing dat you fin' out,

You'll be layin' daid.

Jay-bu'd's sich a tattlah,

Des seem lak his trick

Fu' to tell on folkses

Wadin' in de crick.

Willer boughs a-bendin',

Hidin' of de sky,

Wavin' kin' o' frien'ly

Ez de win' go by,

Elum trees a-shinin',

Dahk an' green an' thick,

Seem to say, "I see yo'

Wadin' in de crick."

But de trees don' chattah,

Dey des lok an' sigh

Lak hit's kin' o' peaceful

Des a-bein' nigh,

An' you t'ank yo' Mastah

Dat dey trunks is thick

W'en yo' mammy fin's yo'

Wadin' in de crick.

Den yo' run behin' dem

Lak yo' scaihed to def,

Mammy come a-flyin',

Mos' nigh out o' bref;

But she set down gentle

An' she drap huh stick,—

An' fus' t'ing, dey's mammy

Wadin' in de crick.

'Long To'ds Night

Daih's a moughty soothin' feelin'

Hits a dahky man,

'Long to'ds night.

W'en de row is mos' nigh ended,

Den he stops to fan,

'Long to'ds night.

De blue smoke f'om his cabin is a-callin' to him, "Come;"

He smell de bacon cookin', an' he hyeah de fiah hum;

An' he 'mence to sing, 'dough wo'kin' putty nigh done made him dumb,

'Long to'ds night.

Wid his hoe erpon his shouldah

Den he goes erlong,

'Long to'ds night.

An' he keepin' time a-steppin'

Wid a little song,

'Long to'ds night.

De restin'-time's a-comin', an' de time to drink an' eat;

A baby's toddlin' to'ds him on hits little dusty feet,

An' a-goin' to'ds his cabin, an' his suppah's moughty sweet,

'Long to'ds night.

Daih his Ca'line min' de kettle,

Rufus min' de chile,

'Long to'ds night;

An' de sweat roll down his forred,

Mixin' wid his smile,

'Long to'ds night.

He toss his piccaninny, an' he hum a little chune;

De wo'kin' all is ovah, an' de suppah comin' soon;

De wo'kin' time's Decembah, but de restin' time is June,

'Long to'ds night.

Dey's a kin' o' doleful feelin',

Hits a tendah place,

'Long to'ds night;

Dey's a moughty glory in him

Shinin' thoo his face,

'Long to'ds night.

De cabin's lak de big house, an' de fiah's lak de sun;

His wife look moughty lakly, an' de chile de puttiest one;

W'y, hit's blessed, jes' a-livin' w'en a body's wo'k is done.

'Long to'ds night.