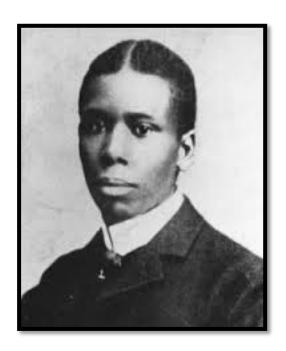
## "We Wear the Mask"

Poet: Paul Laurence Dunbar | 1913



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!

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