

# On Summer

By George Moses Horton

Esteville begins to burn;  
The auburn fields of harvest rise;  
The torrid flames again return,  
And thunders roll along the skies.

Perspiring Cancer lifts his head,  
And roars terrific from on high;  
Whose voice the timid creatures dread;  
From which they strive with awe to fly.

The night-hawk ventures from his cell,  
And starts his note in evening air;  
He feels the heat his bosom swell,  
Which drives away the gloom of fear.

Thou noisy insect, start thy drum;  
Rise lamp-like bugs to light the train;  
And bid sweet Philomela come,  
And sound in front the nightly strain.

The bee begins her ceaseless hum,  
And doth with sweet exertions rise;  
And with delight she stores her comb,  
And well her rising stock supplies.

Let sportive children well beware,  
While sprightly frisking o'er the green;  
And carefully avoid the snare,  
Which lurks beneath the smiling scene.

The mistress bird assumes her nest,  
And broods in silence on the tree,  
Her note to cease, her wings at rest,  
She patient waits her young to see.

Source: African-American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology (University of Illinois Press, 1992)