

Paul Laurence Dunbar



The son of two former enslaved people, Paul Laurence Dunbar was the first African-American poet to reach a wide audience, publishing prolifically before his early death. His use of both dialect and standard English to portray his culture's folkways, joys, and travails distinguishes him from other writers of the time. He also spoke out against racism and injustice in essays that appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and other mainstream publications.