PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR
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(1872-1906)

The first significant African American writer
He was an influential poet of the late 19th and early 20th centuries
He was born in Dayton, Ohio.
He was the son of former slaves.
He became interested in writing verse. (William Wordsworth)
By the age of 14, he was reciting his own poems.
He was editor in chief of the school newspaper.
With the help of former schoolmates Orville and Wilbur Wright, he started a small newspaper for the black community, but it failed.

He had to work as an elevator operator.
In 1892 Dunbar read before Western Association of Writers.

His reading impressed the members so much that the poet soon found himself on the road to national recognition.
BIOGRAPHY

- He achieved national recognition for his 1896 *Lyrics of a Lowly Life* (one of the collection in Ode to Ethiopia).

- He was intimately connected with Frederick Douglass (a former slave who escaped and became a speaker and leader against slavery) and Booker T. Washington and was honored with a ceremonial sword by President Theodore Roosevelt.
His work is known for its colorful language and use of dialect (black community), and a conversational tone, with a brilliant rhetorical structure.

He was later diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1900, and moved to Colorado with his wife, he died at age thirty-three on February 9, 1906.
POETRY

"The Ante-bellum Sermon" and "When Dey 'Listed Colored Soldiers."

"We Wear the Mask," "When Malindy Sings," "Frederick Douglass," "The Colored Soldiers," "The Haunted Oak"

He had written 12 books of poetry, five novels, and four books of short stories.

(He was mainly concerned, in his writing, with issues that related to his people and his culture)

Dunbar's loyalty to the black race and his pride in its achievements, as well as his righteous anger over racial injustice.