

BALLAD OF BOOKER T.

by  
Langston Hughes

Booker T.  
Was a practical man.  
He said, Till the soil  
And learn from the land.  
Let down your bucket  
Where you are.  
Your fate is here  
And not afar.  
To help yourself  
And your fellow man,  
Train your head,  
Your heart, and your hand.  
For smartness alone's  
Surely not meet—  
If you haven't at the same time  
Got something to eat.  
Thus at Tuskegee  
He built a school  
With book-learning there  
And the workman's tool.  
He started out  
In a simple way—  
For yesterday  
Was not today.  
Sometimes he had  
Compromise in his talk—  
For a man must crawl  
Before he can walk—  
And in Alabama in '85  
A joker was lucky  
To be alive.  
But Booker T.  
Was nobody's fool;  
You may carve a dream  
With an humble tool.  
The tallest tower  
Can tumble down  
If it be not rooted  
In solid ground.  
So, being a far-seeing  
Practical man,  
He said, Train your head,  
Your heart, and your hand.  
Your fate is here  
And not afar,  
So let down your bucket  
Where you are.

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