

GO DOWN DEATH

A Poem for Choral Speaking

by
James Weldon Johnson



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(If wishing to use this poem for solo voice, begin at second verse.)

LIGHT WOMEN: Weep not, weep not,
She is not dead;
She's resting in the bosom of Jesus.
Heartbroken husband--weep no more;
Grief-stricken son--weep no more;
Left-lonesome daughter--weep no more;
She's only just gone home.

Day before yesterday morning,
God was looking down from his great, high heaven,
Looking down on all his children,
And his eye fell on Sister Caroline,
Tossing on her bed of pain.
And God's big heart was touched with pity,
With the everlasting pity.

ALL: And God sat back on his throne,
And he commanded that tall, bright angel standing at his right hand:

MEDIUM MAN: "Call me Death!"

ALL: And that tall, bright angel cried in a voice
That broke like a clap of thunder:

MEDIUM MAN: "Call Death!--Call Death!"

MEN, SOFTLY: And the echo sounded down the streets of heaven
Till it reached away back to that shadowy place,
Where Death waits with his pale, white horses.

LIGHT MAN: And Death heard the summons,
And he leaped on his fastest horse,
Pale as a sheet in the moonlight.
Up the golden street Death galloped,
And the hoofs of his horse struck fire from the gold,
But they didn't make no sound.

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