1st draft
May 30, 1941

BALLAD OF BOOKER T.

Old Booker T.
Was a practical man.
He said, Till the soil
and Learn from the land.
Let down your buckets
Where you are:
In your own backyard
There could
be a star.
Train you head,
Your head, and your hand.
To help yourself
And your fellowman.
Thus Booker T.
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 com-
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
From an humble tool---
And the tallest tower
Can tumble down
If it is not rooted
In solid ground.
He said, Train your head,
Your head, and your hand

For smart needs alone
Is surely meet---
If you've got
/Something to eat.

Your head, and your hand--
For Booker T.
Was a practical man.

[AC7059]

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2nd draft
May 31, 1941

BALLAD OF BOOKER T.
by
Langston Hughes

~~Old~~ Booker T.
Was a practical man.
He said, Till the soil
And learn from the land.
Let down your bucket~~s~~
Where you are:
In your own backyard
Said he, seek ~~There could be~~ a star.
and Train your head,
Your heart, and your hand,
To help yourself
And your fellow man,
For smartness alone
Is surely not meet—
If you haven't ~~got~~ also
got Something to eat.
at Tuskegee ~~Thus~~ Booker ~~T. went and~~
Built a school
with Book-learning there
And the workman's tool.
He started out
In a simple way—
For yesterday ~~[illegible]~~
Was not today.
Sometimes he had ~~com~~
Compromise in his talk
For a man must crawl
Before he can walk—
And in Alabama in '85
Negro A ~~joker~~ was lucky
To be alive.
But Booker T.
Was nobody's fool:
You may carve a dream
With an humble tool.
~~[illegible]~~ The tallest tower
Can ~~May~~ tumble down
If it be not rooted
In solid ground.
He said, Train your head,
Your heart, and your hand—
For Booker ~~T.~~
Was a practical man.
~~Let down your bucket~~
~~Where you are:~~
In your own backyard ,
~~[illegible]~~
~~[illegible]~~ He, said, he, is your ~~seek a~~ star.
~~[illegible]~~ Let down your buckets
Where you are.

are
bar
car
gar
jar
mar
par
rar
star
scar
tar
far

[AC 7059]

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3rd draft
June 1, 1941.

BALLAD OF BOOKER T.

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,
Let down your bucket
Where you are.

[AC7059]

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Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

4th draft,
June 1, 1941.

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.

[AC70597]

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BALLAD OF BOOKER T.
by
Langston Hughes

Booker T.
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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.

Langston Hughes

Final draft,
Hollow Hills Farm,
Monterey, California,
June 1, 1941.

[AC7059]

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