

**HARLEM
SHADOWS; POEMS.**

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Harlem shadows; poems. by Claude McKay

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CLAUDE MCKAY

**HARLEM
SHADOWS; POEMS.**



HARLEM SHADOWS

THE POEMS OF

CLAUDE McKAY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
MAX EASTMAN



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A number of these poems appeared in the *Seven Arts*, *Pearson's*, *The Liberator*, *The Messenger*, and *The Cambridge Magazine* (England).

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INTRODUCTION

These poems have a special interest for all the races of man because they are sung by a pure blooded Negro. They are the first significant expression of that race in poetry. We tried faithfully to give a position in our literature to Paul Laurence Dunbar. We have excessively welcomed other black poets of minor talent, seeking in their music some distinctive quality other than the fact that they wrote it. But here for the first time we find our literature vividly enriched by a voice from this most alien race among us. And it should be illuminating to observe that while these poems are characteristic of that race as we most admire it—they are gentle-simple, candid, brave and friendly, quick of laughter and of tears—yet they are still more characteristic of what is deep and universal in mankind. There is no special or exotic kind of merit in them, no quality that demands a transmutation of our own natures to perceive. Just as the sculptures and wood and ivory carvings of