

**SPRING IN NEW
HAMPSHIRE
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Spring in New Hampshire and other poems by Claude McKay

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CLAUDE MCKAY

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Preface

The writer of these verses was born in the Clarendon Hills of Jamaica in 1889. In 1911 he published a small volume in the Negro dialect, and later left for the United States where he worked in various occupations and took courses in Agriculture and English at the Kansas State College. In the spring of this year he visited England to arrange for the publication of his poems.

Claude McKay is a pure blooded Negro, and though we have recently been made aware of some of the more remarkable achievements of African Art typified by the sculpture from Benin, and in music by the 'Spirituals,' this is the first instance of success in poetry with which we in Europe at any rate have been brought into contact. The reasons for this late development are not far to seek, and the difficulties presented by modern literary English as an acquired medium would be sufficient to account for the lacuna ; but the poems here selected may, in the opinion of not a few who have seen them in periodical form, claim a place beside the best work that the present generation is producing in this country.

I. A. RICHARDS

Cambridge, England.
September, 1920.

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Contents

Spring in New Hampshire	9
The Spanish Needle	10
The Lynching	11
To O.E.A.	12
Alfonso, Dressing to Wait at Table, Sings	13
Flowers of Passion	14
To Work	15
Morning Joy	16
Reminiscences	17
On Broadway	18
Love Song	19
North and South	20
Rest in Peace	21
A Memory of June	22
To Winter	23
Winter in the Country	24
After the Winter	25
The Tropics in New York	26
I Shall Return	27
The Castaways	28
December 1919	29
Flame-Heart	30
In Bondage ✓	31

Harlem Shadows	32
✓ The Harlem Dancer	33
A Prayer	34
✓ The Barrier	35
When Dawn Comes to the City	36
The Choice	37
Sukee River	38
✓ Exhortation	39

These poems are by Langston Hughes and are included in the book "Harlem" by Langston Hughes.

Spring in New Hampshire

(To J. L. J. F. E.)

Too green the springing April grass,
Too blue the silver-speckled sky,
For me to linger here, alas,
While happy winds go laughing by,
Wasting the golden hours indoors,
Washing windows and scrubbing floors.

Too wonderful the April night,
Too faintly sweet the first May flowers,
The stars too gloriously bright,
For me to spend the evening hours,
When fields are fresh and streams are leaping,
Wearied, exhausted, dully sleeping.

The Spanish Needle

Lovely dainty Spanish needle
With your yellow flower and white,
Dew bedecked and softly sleeping,
Do you think of me to-night?

Shadowed by the spreading mango,
Nodding o'er the rippling stream,
Tell me, dear plant of my childhood,
Do you of the exile dream?

Do you see me by the brook's side
Catching crayfish 'neath the stone,
As you did the day you whispered:
Leave the harmless dears alone?

Do you see me in the meadow
Coming from the woodland spring
With a bamboo on my shoulder
And a pail slung from a string?

Do you see me all expectant
Lying in an orange grove,
While the swee-swees sing above me,
Waiting for my elf-eyed love?

Lovely dainty Spanish needle,
Source to me of sweet delight,
In your far-off sunny southland
Do you dream of me to-night?

The Lynching

His spirit in smoke ascended to high heaven.
His father, by the cruellest way of pain,
Had bidden him to his bosom once again:
The awful sin remained still unforgiven.
All night a bright and solitary star
(Perchance the one that ever guided him,
Yet gave him up at last to Fate's wild whim)
Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char.
Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
The ghastly body swaying in the sun:
The women thronged to look, but never a one
Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;
And little lads, lynchers that were to be,
Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.