

A Memory of June

Claude McKay

When June comes dancing o'er the death of May,
 With scarlet roses tinting her green breast,
 And mating thrushes ushering in her day,
 And Earth on tiptoe for her golden guest,

5 I always see the evening when we met—
 The first of June baptized in tender rain—
 And walked home through the wide streets, gleaming wet,
 Arms locked, our warm flesh pulsing with love's pain.

I always see the cheerful little room,
 10 And in the corner, fresh and white, the bed,
 Sweet scented with a delicate perfume,
 Wherein for one night only we were wed;

Where in the starlit stillness we lay mute,
 And heard the whispering showers all night long,
 15 And your brown burning body was a lute
 Whereon my passion played his fevered song.

When June comes dancing o'er the death of May,
 With scarlet roses staining her fair feet,
 My soul takes leave of me to sing all day
 20 A love so fugitive and so complete.

Textual Note

This poem also appeared in:

- *Spring in New Hampshire* (1920)
- *Cambridge Magazine* (Summer, 1920)
- *The Liberator* (August, 1921)

6 baptized] baptised *Spr., Lib.*

10 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*

12 ;] : *Spr., Cam.*

13 ,] *om. , Cam.*

16 my] wild *Spr., Cam.*

20 love so fugitive and so] night of rare love, perfect
 and *Spr., Cam.*