

Absence

Claude McKay

Your words dropped into my heart like pebbles into a pool,
Rippling around my breast and leaving it melting cool.

Your kisses fell sharp on my flesh like dawn-dews from the limb,
Of a fruit-filled lemon tree when the day is young and dim.

5 Like soft rain-christened sunshine, as fragile as rare gold lace,
Your breath, sweet-scented and warm, has kindled my tranquil face.

But a silence vasty-deep, oh deeper than all these ties
Now, through the menacing miles, brooding between us lies.

And more than the songs I sing, I await your written word,
10 To stir my fluent¹ blood as never your presence stirred.

Textual Note

This poem also appeared in *The Liberator* (March, 1922), signed “Claude McKay.”

Editorial Notes

1. **Fluent:** Free flowing.