Alfonso, Dressing to Wait at Table
Claude McKay

Alfonso is a handsome bronze-hued lad
   Of subtly-changing and surprising parts;
His moods are storms that frighten and make glad,
   His eyes were made to capture women’s hearts.

5 Down in the glory-hole Alfonso sings
   An olden song of wine and clinking glasses
And riotous rakes; magnificently flings
   Gay kisses to imaginary lasses.

Alfonso’s voice of mellow music thrills
   Our swaying forms and steals our hearts with joy;
And when he soars, his fine falsetto trills
   Are rarest notes of gold without alloy.

But, O Alfonso! wherefore do you sing
   Dream-songs of carefree men and ancient places?
15 Soon we shall be beset by clamouring
   Of hungry and importunate palefaces.

Textual Note
This poem also appears in *Cambridge Magazine* (Summer, 1920) and *Spring in New Hampshire* (1920).

Editorial Notes
1. Glory-hole: “A receptacle (as a drawer, room, etc.) in which things are heaped together without any attempt at order or tidiness” (OED).
2. Rake: “A fashionable or stylish man of dissolute or promiscuous habits” (OED).