

# Courage

Claude McKay

O lonely heart so timid of approach,  
Like the shy tropic flower that shuts its lips  
To the faint touch of tender finger tips:  
What is your word? What question would you broach?

5 Your lustrous-warm eyes are too sadly kind  
To mask the meaning of your dreamy tale,  
Your guarded life too exquisitely frail  
Against the daggers of my warring mind.

10 There is no part of the unyielding earth,  
Even bare rocks where the eagles build their nest,  
Will give us undisturbed and friendly rest.  
No dewfall softens this vast belt of dearth.

15 But in the socket-chiseled teeth of strife,  
That gleam in serried<sup>1</sup> files in all the lands,  
We may join hungry, understanding hands,  
And drink our share of ardent love and life.

## Editorial Notes

1. **Serried:** Packed close together.