

Flame-Heart

Claude McKay

So much have I forgotten in ten years,
 So much in ten brief years! I have forgot
 What time the purple apples come to juice,
 And what month brings the shy forget-me-not¹.

5 I have forgot the special, startling season
 Of the pimento's² flowering and fruiting;
 What time of year the ground doves brown the fields
 And fill the noonday with their curious fluting.
 I have forgotten much, but still remember
 10 The poinsettia's red, blood-red in warm December.

I still recall the honey-fever grass,
 But cannot recollect the high days when
 We rooted them out of the ping-wing⁴ path
 To stop the mad bees in the rabbit pen.

15 I often try to think in what sweet month
 The languid painted ladies used to dapple
 The yellow by-road mazing⁵ from the main,⁶
 Sweet with the golden threads of the rose-apple.
 I have forgotten—strange—but quite remember
 20 The poinsettia's red, blood-red in warm December.

What weeks, what months, what time of the mild year
 We cheated school to have our fling at tops?
 What days our wine-thrilled bodies pulsed with joy
 Feasting upon blackberries in the copse⁷?
 25 Oh some I know! I have embalmed the days,
 Even the sacred moments when we played,

2 !] ; *Spr.*

3 ,] *om. Spr.*

4 .] ; *Spr.*

5 I have forgot] Forgotten is *Spr.*

6 the pimento's³] some beloved tree's *Spr.*

6 ;] , *Spr.*

8 .] : *Spr.*

12 cannot recollect the high days] I cannot bring back

to mind just *Spr.*

17 by-road] bye road *Spr.*

18 .] : *Spr.*

19 —] , *Spr.*

19 —] , *Spr.*

21 of] o' *Spr.*

26 moments] , *add. Spr.*

All innocent of passion, uncorrupt,
 At noon and evening in the flame-heart's shade.
 We were so happy, happy, I remember,
 30 Beneath the poinsettia's red in warm December.

Editorial Notes

1. **Forget-me-not:** a flowering plant of the genus *myosotis*.
2. **Pimento:** tree that bears allspice.
3. **Pimento:** tree that bears allspice.
4. **Ping-wing:** a penguin plant, a prickly shrub, used to build fences.
5. **Mazing:** here, as an adjective, meaning winding, like a maze.
6. **Main:** The sea. The OED notes such use is "now chiefly poetical."
7. **Copse:** a small wood.

27 ,] *om.*

28 .] : *Spr.*

29 happy,] — *add. Spr.*

29 ,] *om. Spr.*