

French Leave¹

Claude McKay

No servile little fear shall daunt my will
 This morning. I have courage steeled to say
 I will be lazy, conqueringly still,
 I will not lose the hours in toil this day.

5 The roaring world without, careless of souls,
 Shall leave me to my placid dream of rest,
 My four walls shield me from its shouting ghouls,
 And all its hates have fled my quiet breast.

And I will loll here resting, wide awake,
 10 Dead to the world of work, the world of love,
 I laze contented just for dreaming's sake
 With not the slightest urge to think or move.

How tired unto death, how tired I was!
 Now for a day I put my burdens by,
 15 And like a child amidst the meadow grass
 Under the southern sun, I languid lie

And feel the bed about me kindly deep,
 My strength ooze gently from my hollow bones,
 My worried brain drift aimlessly to sleep,
 20 Like softening to a song of tuneful tones.

Textual Note

This poem also appeared in *The Liberator* (April, 1922).

Editorial Notes

1. **French leave:** an unexcused absence; to without permission; in military contexts, to be absent without leave.

2 .] , *Lib.*

11 sake] , *add. Lib.*

16 lie] , *add. Lib.*

20 softening] soften *Lib.*