

Heritage

Claude McKay

Now the dead past seems vividly alive,
And in this shining moment I can trace,
Down through the vista of the vanished years,
Your faun-like¹ form, your fond elusive face.

5 And suddenly some secret spring's released,
And unawares a riddle is revealed,
And I can read like large, black-lettered print,
What seemed before a thing forever sealed.

10 I know the magic word, the graceful thought,
The song that fills me in my lucid hours,
The spirit's wine that thrills my body through,
And makes me music-drunk, are yours, all yours.

I cannot praise, for you have passed from praise,
I have no tinted thoughts to paint you true;
15 But I can feel and I can write the word;
The best of me is but the least of you.

Editorial Notes

1. **Faun-like:** like a faun, a forest god or goddess of Greek mythology.