

I Shall Return

Claude McKay

I shall return again; I shall return
 To laugh and love and watch with wonder-eyes
 At golden noon the forest fires burn,
 Wafting their blue-black smoke to sapphire skies.
 5 I shall return to loiter by the streams
 That bathe the brown blades of the bending grasses,
 And realize once more my thousand dreams
 Of waters rushing down the mountain passes.
 I shall return to hear the fiddle and fife
 10 Of village dances, dear delicious tunes
 That stir the hidden depths of native life,
 Stray melodies of dim remembered runes¹.
 I shall return, I shall return again,
 To ease my mind of long, long years of pain.

Textual Note

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

Editorial Notes

1. **Rune:** Ancient letters and characters of the earliest Germanic alphabet, preceding the Latin alphabet. In extended use, a song, poem, or verse, esp. a cryptic or magic verse, spell, or incantation.

2 wonder-eyes] , *add. Spr., Cam.*

7 realize] realise *Spr., Cam.*

12 .] : *Spr., Cam.*

13 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*