

North and South

Claude McKay

O sweet are tropic lands for waking dreams!
 There time and life move lazily along.
 There by the banks of blue-and-silver streams
 Grass-sheltered crickets chirp incessant song,
 5 Gay-colored lizards loll all through the day,
 Their tongues outstretched for careless little flies,
 And swarthy¹ children in the fields at play,
 Look upward laughing at the smiling skies.
 A breath of idleness is in the air
 10 That casts a subtle spell upon all things,
 And love and mating-time are everywhere,
 And wonder to life's commonplaces clings.
 The fluttering humming-bird darts through the trees
 And dips his long beak in the big bell-flowers,
 15 The leisured buzzard floats upon the breeze,
 Riding a crescent cloud for endless hours,
 The sea beats softly on the emerald strands—
 O sweet for quiet dreams are tropic lands!

Textual Note

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

Editorial Notes

1. **Swarthy**: A somewhat archaic term for dark, or dark skinned.

2 .] ; *Spr., Cam.*
 5 colored] coloured *Spr., Cam.*
 7 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*
 11 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*

15 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*
 16 ,] ; *Spr., Cam.*
 17 strands] , *add. Spr., Cam.*
 18 quiet] dainty *Spr., Cam.*