

On a Primitive Canoe

Claude McKay

Here, passing lonely down this quiet lane,
Before a mud-splashed window long I pause
To gaze and gaze, while through my active brain
Still thoughts are stirred to wakefulness; because
5 Long, long ago in a dim unknown land,
A massive forest-tree, ax-felled, adze-hewn¹,
Was deftly done by cunning mortal hand
Into a symbol of the tender moon.
Why does it thrill more than the handsome boat
10 That bore me o'er the wild Atlantic ways,
And fill me with rare sense of things remote
From this harsh life of fretful nights and days?
I cannot answer but, whate'er it be,
An old wine has intoxicated me.

Editorial Notes

1. **Adze-hewn:** That is carved by an adze, an axe-like tool for the carving of wood.