

Rest in Peace

Claude McKay

No more for you the city's thorny ways,
 The ugly corners of the Negro belt¹;
 The miseries and pains of these harsh days
 By you will never, never again be felt.

5 No more, if still you wander, will you meet
 With nights of unabating bitterness;
 They cannot reach you in your safe retreat,
 The city's hate, the city's prejudice!

'Twas sudden—but your menial task is done,
 10 The dawn now breaks on you, the dark is over,
 The sea is crossed, the longed-for port is won;
 Farewell, oh, fare you well! my friend and lover.

Textual Note

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

Editorial Notes

1. **Negro Belt:** A region of the U.S. South, from Mississippi to Virginia, home to a high concentration of enslaved African Americans before Emancipation. Booker T. Washington, in his autobiography *Up from Slavery* offers the following explanation of the cognate term "black belt": "I have often been asked to define the term 'Black Belt.' So far as I can learn, the term was first used to designate a part of the country which was distinguished by the colour of the soil. The part of the country possessing this thick, dark, and naturally rich soil was, of course, the part of the South where the slaves were most profitable, and consequently they were taken there in the largest numbers. Later, and especially since the war [the American Civil War], the term seems to be used wholly in a political sense---that is, to designate the counties where the balck people outnumber the white."

6 ;] , Spr., Cam.
 12 ,] om. Spr., Cam.

12 my] fond Spr., Cam.