

# The Castaways

Claude McKay

The vivid grass with visible delight  
 Springing triumphant from the pregnant earth,  
 The butterflies, and sparrows in brief flight  
 Chirping and dancing for the season's birth,  
 5 The dandelions and rare daffodils  
 That touch the deep-stirred heart with hands of gold,  
 The thrushes sending forth their joyous trills,—  
 Not these, not these did I at first behold!  
 But seated on the benches daubed with green,  
 10 The castaways of life, a few asleep,  
 Some withered women desolate and mean,  
 And over all, life's shadows dark and deep.  
 Moaning I turned away, for misery  
 I have the strength to bear but not to see.

## Textual Note

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

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2 ,] ; *Spr., Cam.*  
 3 The ] And *Spr., Cam.*  
 5 The ] And *Spr., Cam.*  
 6 touch ] hold *Spr., Cam.*  
 6 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*  
 7 The ] And *Spr., Cam.*  
 7 ,—] ; *Spr., Cam.*

8 !] : *Spr., Cam.*  
 10 life ] earth *Spr., Cam.*  
 10 a few ] some fast *Spr., Cam.*  
 11 Some withered women desolate and mean, ] With  
 many a withered woman wedged between, *Spr., Cam.*  
 12 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*  
 12 .] : *Spr., Cam.*