

The Lynching

Claude McKay

His Spirit in smoke ascended to high heaven.
 His father, by the cruelest way of pain,
 Had bidden him to his bosom once again;
 The awful sin remained still unforgiven.
 5 All night a bright and solitary star
 (Perchance the one that ever guided him,
 Yet gave him up at last to Fate's wild whim)
 Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char.
 Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
 10 The ghastly body swaying in the sun
 The women thronged to look, but never a one
 Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;
 And little lads, lynchers that were to be,
 Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.

Textual Note

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

1 Spirit] spirit *Spr., Cam.*

2 cruelest] cruellest *Spr., Cam.*

3 ;] : *Spr., Cam.*

10 sun] : *add. Spr., Cam.*