

The Spanish Needle¹

Claude McKay

Lovely dainty Spanish needle
With your yellow flower and white,
Dew bedecked and softly sleeping,
Do you think of me to-night?

5 Shadowed by the spreading mango,
Nodding o'er the rippling stream,
Tell me, dear plant of my childhood,
Do you of the exile dream?

Do you see me by the brook's side
10 Catching crayfish 'neath the stone,
As you did the day you whispered:
Leave the harmless dears alone?

Do you see me in the meadow
Coming from the woodland spring
15 With a bamboo on my shoulder
And a pail slung from a string?

Do you see me all expectant
Lying in an orange grove,
While the swee-swees² sing above me,
20 Waiting for my elf-eyed love?

Lovely dainty Spanish needle,
Source to me of sweet delight,
In your far-off sunny southland
Do you dream of me to-night?

Textual Note

This poem also appears in *Cambridge Magazine* (Summer, 1920).

Editorial Notes

1. **Spanish Needle:** A wildflower (*bidens alba*), with white and yellow blossoms.
2. **Swee-swee:** the Swee Waxbill, a small finch found in the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa.