

The Tropics in New York

Claude McKay

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger-root,
 Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
 And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,
 Fit for the highest prize at parish¹ fairs,

5 Set in the window, bringing memories
 Of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,
 And dewy dawns, and mystical blue skies
 In benediction over nun-like hills.

My eyes grew dim, and I could no more gaze;
 10 A wave of longing through my body swept,
 And, hungry for the old, familiar ways,
 I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

Textual Note

This poem also appeared in:

- *Spring in New Hampshire* (1920)
- *Cambridge Magazine* (Summer, 1920)
- *The Liberator* (May, 1920)

In its appearance in *The Liberator*, this poem did not feature any line indentation.

Editorial Notes

1. **Parish:** “A division or department of a county or other area... (in some former British Colonies) a local division used for civil purposes, frequently as an electoral district; a civil parish” (OED).

1 ,] *om. Spr., Cam.*

6 fruit-trees] fruit trees *Lib.*

6 laden] , *add. Lib.*

6 rills] sills [*sic*] *Lib.*

7 ,] *om. Spr., Cam., Lib.*

9 My eyes grew dim, and I could no more gaze;] Mine eyes grew dim and I could no more gaze, *Spr., Cam.A*

wave of longing overwhelmed my soul, *Lib.*

9 A wave of longing through my body swept,] My heart grew faint ceasing its furious throbbing; *Lib.*

9 And, hungry for the old, familiar ways,] And in the thronged street, losing self-control, *Lib.*

9 I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.] Like a child lost and lone, I fell to sobbing. *Lib.*