

To One Coming North

Claude McKay

At first you'll joy to see the playful snow,
 Like white moths trembling on the tropic air,
 Or waters of the hills that softly flow
 Gracefully falling down a shining stair.

5 And when the fields and streets are covered white
 And the wind-worried void is chilly, raw,
 Or underneath a spell of heat and light
 The cheerless frozen spots begin to thaw,

Like me you'll long for home, where birds' glad song
 10 Means flowering lanes and leas¹ and spaces dry,
 And tender thoughts and feelings fine and strong,
 Beneath a vivid silver-flecked blue sky.

But oh! more than the changeless southern isles,
 When Spring has shed upon the earth her charm,
 15 You'll love the Northland wreathed in golden smiles
 By the miraculous sun turned glad and warm.

Textual Note

This poem also appears in *The Liberator* (August, 1921).

Editorial Notes

1. **Leas:** Grassy area; from the OED: "A tract of open ground, either meadow, pasture, or arable land. After Old English chiefly found (exc. where it is the proper name of a particular piece of ground) in poetical or rhetorical use, ordinarily applied to grass land."

10 flowering] flower-filled *Lib.*

13 s] *S Lib.*