

Winter in the Country

Claude McKay

Sweet life! how lovely to be here
 And feel the soft sea-laden breeze
 Strike my flushed face, the spruce's fair
 Free limbs to see, the lesser trees'

5 Bare hands to touch, the sparrow's cheep
 To heed, and watch his nimble flight
 Above the short brown grass asleep.
 Love glorious in his friendly might,

Music that every heart could bless,
 10 And thoughts of life serene, divine,
 Beyond my power to express,
 Crowd round this lifted heart of mine!

But oh! to leave this paradise
 For the city's dirty basement room,
 15 Where, beauty hidden from the eyes,
 A table, bed, bureau and broom

In corner set, two crippled chairs
 All covered up with dust and grim
 With hideousness and scars of years,
 20 And gaslight burning weird and dim,

Will welcome me . . . And yet, and yet
 This very wind, the winter birds,
 The glory of the soft sunset,
 Come there to me in words.

Textual Note

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

11 ,] om. *Spr., Cam.*

22 This very wind] The sea-wind here *Spr., Cam.*

24 Come there] There come *Spr., Cam.*