



Claude McKay

(1890-1948)

The White City (1922)

I will not toy with it nor bend an inch.  
Deep in the secret chambers of my heart  
I muse my life-long hate, and without flinch  
I bear it nobly as I live my part.  
My being would be a skeleton, a shell,  
If this dark Passion that fills my every mood,  
And makes my heaven in the white world's hell,  
Did not forever feed me vital blood.  
I see the mighty city through a mist--  
The strident trains that speed the goaded mass,  
The poles and spires and towers vapor-kissed,  
The fortified port through which the great ships pass,  
The tides, the wharves, the dens I contemplate,  
Are sweet like wanton loves because I hate.