

Countee Cullen, My Soul's High Song, ed. Gerald Early (New York: Anchor, 1991)

LAMENT

Now let all lovely things embark
Upon the sea of mist
With her whose luscious mouth the dark,
Grim troubadour has kissed.

The silver clock that ticked away
Her days, and never knew
Its beats were sword thrusts to the clay
That too much beauty slew.

The pillow favored with her tears
And hallowed by her head;
I shall not even keep my fears,
Now their concern is dead.

But where shall I bury sun and rain,
How mortalise the stars,
How still the half-heard cries of pain
That seared her soul with scars?

In what sea depths shall all the seeds
Of every flower die?
Where shall I scatter the broken reeds,
And how erase the sky?

And where shall I find a hole so deep
No troubled ghost may rise?
There will I put my heart to sleep
Wanting her face and eyes.