

## I Too

I, too, sing America.  
I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

To-morrow  
I'll sit at the table  
When company comes  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen"  
Then

Besides, they'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed,--

I, too, am America

**-Langston Hughes**

## White Houses

Your door is shut against my tightened face,  
And I am sharp as steel with discontent;  
But I possess the courage and the grace  
To bear my anger proudly and unbent.  
The pavement slabs burn loose beneath my feet,  
A chafing savage, down the decent street,  
And passion rends my vitals as I pass,  
Where boldly shines your shuttered door of glass.  
Oh I must search for wisdom every hour,  
Deep in my wrathful bosom sore and raw,  
And find in it the superhuman power  
To hold me to the letter of your law!  
Oh I must keep my heart inviolate  
Against the potent poison of your hate.

**-Claude McKay**

## **The Incident**

Once riding in old Baltimore,  
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee.  
I saw a Baltimorean  
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small.  
And he was no whit bigger  
And so I smiled, but he poked out  
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore  
From May until December;  
Of all the things that happened there  
That's all that I remember.

**-Countee Cullen**