The Tropics of New York
_Claude McKay_ (1890–1948)

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger root
Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,
Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,

Sat in the window, bringing memories
of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,
And dewy dawns, and mystical skies
In benediction over nun-like hills.

My eyes grow dim, and I could no more gaze;
A wave of longing through my body swept,
And, hungry for the old, familiar ways
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

Storm Ending
_Jean Toomer_ (1894–1967)

Thunder blossoms gorgeously above our heads,
Great, hollow, bell like flowers,
Rumbling in the wind,
Stretching clappers to strike our ears...
Full lipped flowers
Bitten by the sun
Bleeding rain
Dripping rain like golden honey...
And the sweet Earth flying from the thunder.

A Black Man Talks of Reaping
_Arna Bontemps_ (1902–1973)

I have sown beside all waters in my day.
I planted deep, within my heart the fear
that wind or fowl would take the grain away.
I planted safe against this stark, lean year.

I scattered seed enough to plant the land
in rows from Canada to Mexico
but for my reaping only what the hand
can hold at once is all that I can show.

Yet what I sowed and what the orchard yields
my brother's sons are gathering stalk and root;
small wonder then my children glean in fields
they have not sown, and feed on bitter fruit.
From the Dark Tower  
*Countee Cullen* (1903–1946)

We shall not always plant while others reap  
The golden increment of bursting fruit,  
Not always countenance, abject and mute,  
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;  
Not everlastingly while others sleep  
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,  
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;  
We were not made to eternally weep.  
The night whose sable breast relieves the stark,  
White stars is no less lovely being dark,  
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all  
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall;  
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,  
And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.

Incident  
*Countee Cullen* (1903–1946)

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 not 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.