

LINES TO A DISTANT FRIEND

Across two hundred miles
I share with you
Each lovely thing:
The smell of spring,
The busying
Of tulip buds,
The pussy-willow's fuzzy bloom,
The mayflower's rare perfume,
And, daily new,
The twinkley dew—
I share all these with you.

Across two hundred miles
I see your smiles,
And love each lovely thing with you:
The day,
The warm-sweet noon,
The night,
The tentacles of moon
That trail within my quiet room—
I love each lovely thing with you.

But, ah, sometimes I find
Two bridgeless hundred miles
Grown long:
At sunset-glow
My song runs weary-low,
And each sweet thing
I've shared with you—
The smell of spring,
The busying
Of tulip buds,
The twinkley dew,
And every lovely thing—
Is there with you.

—A. P. C.

GLORY OF THE LAND

The trial had been short. The accumulation of evidence had been so great that any attempt to fight the case was almost futile. The Jury had retired to reach a decision, but there was not a person in the crowded courtroom who did not know what the ultimate verdict would be. Jimmy Hart had no chance this time. And nobody gave a darn.

Jimmy Hart was only a nigger, and Jimmy Hart was no good. All of the townsfolk knew his history, and the history was as bad as Jimmy Hart. No Jimmy Hart was no good, so nobody gave a darn. It was the likes of him that created the need for law courts. And, what was more, he was a Catholic, and he went to Church every Sunday. What a s'range Church it must be, to allow a dirty nigger rip to sit next to decent white folks! Yes sir, go to Church on Sunday and steal your eyes out on Monday, that's what he spent his time at. Well, he won't be able to go to Church now and he won't be able to go to the movies with the whites, nor walk on the same sidewalk, nor drink from the same public fountain, nor steal from helpless old folks, nor scare young girls every night. No sir, Jimmy Hart was going to be put away for good this time.

The Jury was coming back into the room. "Big Jack" Callane was all smiles. That was a feather in his cap now, being Foreman of the Jury and all that. "Big Jack" never wanted niggers let into the town anyway. If the people had listened to him there would never have been any trouble. Jade Collins came in behind Jack. Jade kicked the nigger out of the Bamboo Club one night. "Git out, ya damn nigger, this ain't no den of thieves," Jade had said, and everybody had like to laugh their heads off. Jade was a real wit, a fine fellow. They all took their seats and the Judge asked for the verdict. "Big Jack" stood up and said, "we find the nigger guilty," and sat down. "Big Jack" was always frank, no beating around the bush with him. He thought the nigger was guilty and said so. "The accused" only means whites. A nigger is just a nigger, and there's no sense in trying to change his color by calling him something different.

"Prisoner at the bar, have you anything to say before sentence is passed?"

Anything to say? What did Jimmy Hart have to say to white people, him a nigger? He was guilty, and that was that. No sir, no squealing out of it this time. Only one place for niggers and he was going there

Jimmy Hart took his feet and looked at the Judge. "Yo means dat if'n Ah says somethin' dat it's goin' to count?"

"The Prisoner has the privilege of addressing the Court before sentence is passed."

"Well, Jedge, Ah ain't got much to say. Ah said it to de Persecuter befo' but it didn' seem to count much. Ah ain't nevah done nothin' bad, except get mad when Ah gets kicked outa de way. But Ah nevah say nothin'. Wen Ah goes to Church some peoples feels queer havin' a nigger sit besides dem, but God nevah said nothin' yet, nor lef' de Church becos Ah went in so Ah guessed it was all right to stay. Ah once seed a fella stealin from Miz Cape but Ah nevah sed nothin' becos he wasn' no nigger an Ah knowed nobody'd believe me, but Ah nevah thot that was bad not to tell.

Ah nevah goes down to bote, becos Ah knows dat a nigger should nevah bote. Mist Killane tole me dat one day wen Ah cleaned out his sewah fo' him. Ah nevah wanted to do nothin' bad an' nevah thot Ah did. When Ah foun' Mist Kells layin' on de side ob de road Ah knowed Ah had to help him, but Ah didn' know he was daid. Dat's why Ah stayed dere an' stopped Mist Mitchael's cah to get some help. Ah nevah knowed nothin' about people what was hurt, except dat you're supossed to pray fer dem, an' Ah prayed fer Mist Kells. Ah didn' think Mist Kells would min' a nigger prayin' fer him when he was hurt bad. Ah knows dat some niggers go to Hebben, becos dem fellas in de fiery furnace was niggers, an' dat dey would get God to help Mist Kells. But Ah nevah hurt Mist Kells. Mist Michael jest saw me kneelin' down besides him an' de blood all ovah me an' said, "Git outa dere, yo' dam' nigger." Den he got down by Mist Kells an' felt his heart an' wris'. Den he look at me, an' cursed. Ah done wanna say what he sed becos it don' soun' good befor white wimmen. Den he sed, 'Yo' dam' nigger, yo' kilt him an' stole his money.' Ah sed no, Ah didn', an' he kicked me an' tole me to get in his cah, an' he hit me hard so's I couldn' do nothin'. When he got to town he took me to de police an' tole dem Ah kilt Mist Kells. But Ah nevah did. Ah didn' wan' money cos Ah couldn' go nowhere to spen' much. An den de Persecuter tole me Ah laid down in de gutter waitin' fer Mist Kells an' kilt him an' stole his money an' hide de weepin', but Ah nevah did. Ah is a purty good nigger. Ah gets mad when Ah gets beat but Ah nevah says nothin'."

"Have you anything further to say?

"No sah, Ah ain't."

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Well, the nerve of that nigger. Calling the likes of Mister Michaels a liar. Didn't Mr. Michaels see him hit Mr. Kells! What did the stupid, doodling fool of a judge ever let him

"..... hang by the neck until you are dead. Court is adjourned."

That should have ended it as far as the People vs Jimmy Hart went. The date for the execution was set, with time enough allowed for an appeal. But Justice was not to wait that long. Justice is sometimes inclined to be finnickey, and she did not intend to wait for three months to catch up to Jimmy Hart. Sometime through the night that grand old social institution of the South, the limb of an oak tree, was put to use. When the sun rose in the morning, one of the first human figures it shone upon was that of the now lifeless Jimmy Hart. Justice had triumphed.

—GREEN '47