

SONG OF NEW YORK

Oh we have fled the world's most splendid town,
Grey stone and iron rushing to the sky,
Firm-footed where the Hudson broadens down,
Fronting the world with steely majesty.
But we can not forget who have once seen
The sparkling eyes of New York from the bay,
Her naked body standing sheer and clean,
Pure grace like birches in the opening day.

We linger by a dim medieval wall
And hear a wrinkled guide repeat his story,
Now of a knight who, at a monarch's call,
Beat back the foe and filled this spot with glory.
But I would hear instead the raucous sound
Of an old "elevated" overhead,
Be hurrying to the station Harlem-bound,
Than hear dead talk of things completely dead.

Oh often all alone on dim wet nights,
From the rear platform of a fast "El" train,
I watched the city's undulating lights
And felt about my heart the antique pain
That man has always felt for beauty's signs.
And often I was wildly moved to test
Myself against the city's gleaming lines,
To feel their edges touch my bare brown breast!

I looked at Paris, like a lovely whore,
In jewelled dress attracting everyone,
And Berlin, like a raw and bleeding sore,
And London city shut out from the sun.
And vividly I realized New York,
A demon holding in his hand a whip,
Driving me through the cold straight streets to work
With a song frozen dead upon my lip.

Yet once you stand upon New Jersey's soil
With a child's attitude and turn your face
Toward the first citadel of modern toil,
A great rock jutting grandly out in space,
You'll never forget that marvel of these years,
Around which wash the world's increasing tides,
And, spurred by loves and hopes and stinging fears,
Six millions scrambling up her steel-ribbed sides.

Abroad we shall be moved by memories warm
Of the great city graceful like a birch,
And find more mystery in her perfect form
Than in the spirit of an ancient church.
Deep in our thoughts her burning lines will flow,
Our veins pulsating with the poignant ache
That men have always felt who strangely go
Like gipsies through the world for beauty's sake.

Claude McKay

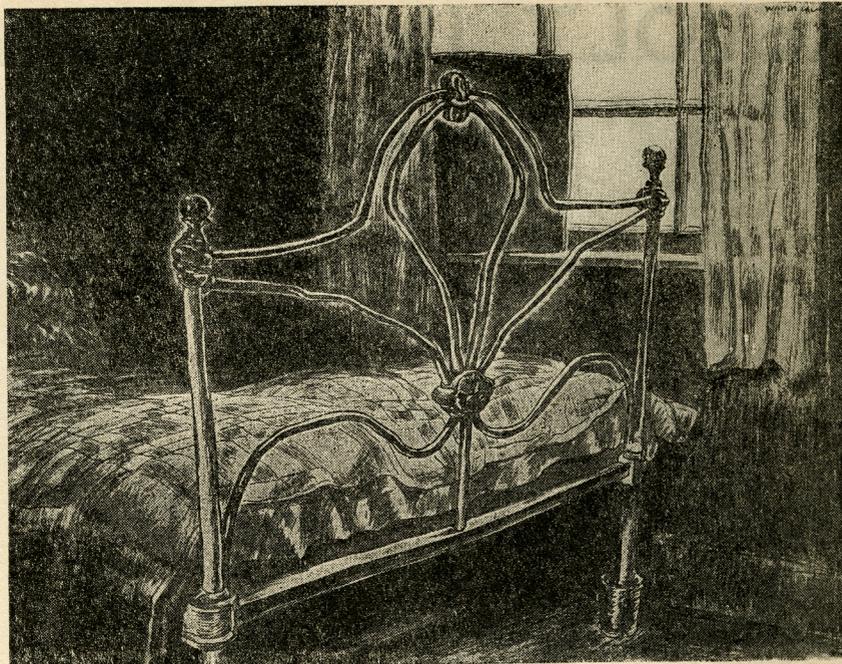
MEMORIES

A child ran alone,
And nothing followed that he felt.
He never heard the sky moan
For old men. He never knelt
To call the hounds—that behind him ran alone
And searching smelt.

He did not hear their cries,
For there was curving earth between.
But he is taller now, and wise
Enough to listen as they lean
Upon the wind—that can turn and bring their cries
So clear and keen.

He still can look away
And do the business of his prime.
He has not foreseen the day
When he will sit and they will climb
And lick his face—that will never frown away
The tongues of time.

Mark Van Doren



DRAWING BY WANDA GAG

THE TIRED BED

THAT'S ALL THERE IS

By KAROL REMBOV

"STEVE," says Mary Karzmuski, "now that you've drunk up all the gin there is, perhaps you'll go and fix all them boards there is loose on the fence." (Only she's a Polack and says it mostly in Polack.)

"Aw hell," says Steve Karzmuski, "loose boards is all the fence there is." (Only he's a furriner and doesn't say more than the first coupla words in English.)

Mary looks Steve over. "It's a damn good thing for you you're all the husband there is."

Steve only says, "Is this all the fried mush there is?"

Mary says, "It's all the breakfast there is."

Steve goes. Pretty soon he comes back and says, "Mary, I can't fix the bloody fence, 'cause this is all the nails there is." But pretty soon he is fixing it and thinking, "Mother of God, ain't it tough that Mary's all the wife there is."

Mike Grady is sitting in the next yard. He is reading a capitalist sheet, for it's all the paper there is. First he reads the murders, and that's all the news there is. Then he skips over all the want ads there is and he leans back in the rocker and says, "Steve, what are you fixing the fence for?"

Steve says, "That's all the work there is."

Mike says, "Yea, but the strike's all the vacation there is."

Inside the kitchen—and that's about all the house there is—Mary says, "Little Mary, you're all the help there is. Here, take all the money there is and buy a loaf of stale bread. It'll let Mister Davidson know how bad off we is, but he's all the store there is."

Little Mary goes along all the road there is. Here comes a man, showing all the signs there is. "Gimme all the money there is in your hand," he says.

"What fur?" says little Mary. "Run along, 'cause I ain't got all the time there is." (Only she says it in

English, because she ain't no furriner and she's had all the learnin' there is in the village school.)

The drunk says, "'Cause I want all the gravy there is sloppin' aroun' loose. I've run into all the sharp corners there is an' I been tanked up with all the hot air there is. . . ."

"Hey Jack, beat it for all the other places there is," says a Stately with a bran-new uniform. So he beat it.

"Jeez," says little Mary, "whadje do that fur?"

"I'm all the law and order there is," says the Stately.

"Jeez," says little Mary, "you must be all the nice Cossacks there is."

At the store Mister Davidson says, "That's all the stale bread there is, and it don't hardly pay to bake so much, all the children there is come in just only for stale bread."

On the way back little Mary thinks of fried pork and boiled potatoes and all the nice eats there is and doesn't nibble any of the bread. But when her mother is cutting it into pieces, just so, little Mary says, "Ma, does Pa get all the crumbs there is?"

Outside Steve is talking with Alfred Robinson. He is all the business agent there is. "Is that all the hope there is?" says Steve.

"Don't worry, you'll get all the strike benefits there is," says Mister Robinson, and he goes to hunt up all the rank and file there is.

Here comes walking along Vanya Weyoff. He is all the Left there is. Steve says to him, "There goes that (illegitimate) labor skate Robinson, the lousy (sexual invert)."

Says Vanya, "What you stick to the union for, when there's all the dirty-work there is?"

Says Steve, "It's all the union there is."

And that, O my Best Beloved, is all the philosophy of all the American Labor Movement there is.