

“Heritage” (1922)  
Gwendolyn Bennett

I want to see the slim palm-trees,  
Pulling at the clouds  
With little pointed fingers . . . .

I want to see lithe Negro girls,  
Etched dark against the sky                    5  
While sunset lingers.

I want to hear the silent sands,  
Singing to the moon  
Before the Sphinx-still face . . . .

I want to hear the chanting                    10  
Around a heathen fire  
Of a strange black race.

I want to breathe the Lotus flow’r,  
Sighing to the stars  
With tendrils drinking at the Nile . . . .    15

I want to see the surging  
Of my sad people’s soul  
Hidden by a minstrel-smile.