America

BY [CLAUDE MCKAY](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/claude-mckay)

Although she feeds me bread of , noun

And sinks into my throat her tiger’s tooth,

Stealing my breath of life, I will confess

I this cultured hell that tests my youth. verb

Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,

Giving me strength erect against her , noun

Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.

Yet, as a rebel fronts a king in state,

I stand within her walls with not a shred

Of terror, , not a word of jeer. noun

Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,

And see her might and granite wonders there,

Beneath the touch of Time’s unerring hand,

Like priceless sinking in the sand. plural noun

1. What is the **tone** of this poem?
2. Which images make the greatest impact for you?
3. Do you see any similarities or differences in this poem and “Harlem” by Langston Hughes?
4. What is McKay’s message to his audience? Write this as a thematic statement.

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Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,

And sinks into my throat her tiger’s tooth,

Stealing my breath of life, I will confess

I love this cultured hell that tests my youth.

Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,

Giving me strength erect against her hate,

Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.

Yet, as a rebel fronts a king in state,

I stand within her walls with not a shred

Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.

Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,

And see her might and granite wonders there,

Beneath the touch of Time’s unerring hand,

Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.