

Both poems written by Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

Tableau

(for Donald Duff)

Locked arm in arm they cross the way,
 The black boy and the white,
The golden splendor of the day,
 The sable pride of night.

From lowered blinds the dark folk stare,
 And here the fair folk talk,
Indignant that these two should dare
 In unison to walk.

Oblivious to look and word
 They pass, and see no wonder
That lightning brilliant as a sword
 Should blaze the path of thunder.

Incident

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 no 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.