

“Song of the Son”

Jean Toomer

Pour O pour that parting soul in song
O pour it in the sawdust glow of night
Into the velvet pine-smoke air tonight,
And let the valley carry it along.
And let the valley carry it along.
O land and soil, red soil and sweet-gum tree,
So scant of grass, so proligate of pines,
Now hush before an epoch's sun declines
Thy son, in time, I have returned to thee,
Thy son, I have in time returned to thee.
In time, for though the sun is setting on
A song-lit race of slaves, it has not set;
Though late, O soil, it is not too late yet
To catch thy plaintive soul, leaving, soon gone,
Leaving, to catch thy plaintive soul soon gone.
O Negro slaves, dark purple ripened plums,
Squeezed, and bursting in the pine-wood air,
Passing, before they stripped the old tree bare
One plum was saved for me, one seed becomes
an everlasting song, a singing tree,
Caroling softly souls of slavery,
What they were, and what they are to me,
Caroling softly souls of slavery.