

# Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem by Helene M Johnson

You are disdainful and magnificent—  
Your perfect body and your pompous gait,  
Your dark eyes flashing solemnly with hate,  
Small wonder that you are incompetent  
To imitate those whom you so despise—  
Your shoulders towering high above the throng,  
Your head thrown back in rich, barbaric song,  
Palm trees and mangoes stretched before your eyes.  
Let others toil and sweat for labor's sake  
And wring from grasping hands their meed of gold.  
Why urge ahead your supercilious feet?  
Scorn will efface each footprint that you make.  
I love your laughter arrogant and bold.  
You are too splendid for this city street.