

Incident

By Countee Cullen
(For Eric Walrond)

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.

Countee Cullen, "Incident" from *My Soul's High Song: The Collected Writings of Countee Cullen*.

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Source: *My Soul's High Song: The Collected Writings of Countee Cullen* (Anchor Books, 1991)