

**VACHEL
LINDSAY**

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но. Він згадував д
першим змінив біжк
ти слабкість, силою.

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**THE CONGO,
AND OTHER
POEMS**

Vachel Lindsay

The Congo, and Other Poems

EAN 8596547356059

DigiCat, 2022

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The Congo

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A Study of the Negro Race

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I. Their Basic Savagery

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
A deep rolling bass. Sagged and reeled and pounded on
the table,
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
More deliberate. Solemnly chanted. THEN I SAW THE
CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles

Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket. And a
thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the
warriors,
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
With a philosophic pause. A roaring, epic, rag-time tune
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Shrilly and with a heavily accented metre. Torch-eyed
and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
HOO, HOO, HOO.
Like the wind in the chimney. Listen to the yell of
Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
"Be careful what you do,
**All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very
heavy.**

Light accents very light. Last line whispered. Or
Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."
II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Rather shrill and high. Wild crap-shooters with a whoop
and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

Read exactly as in first section. THEN I SAW THE
CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas.

Keep as light-footed as possible. A negro fairyland
swung into view,
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

With pomposity. A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.

And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.

With a great deliberation and ghostliness. But the
witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."...

**With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and
pomp.** Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.

**With growing speed and sharply marked dance-
rhythm.** And they pranced with their butterfly partners
there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"

**With a touch of negro dialect,
and as rapidly as possible toward the end.** While the
witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.

Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM."

Slow philosophic calm. Oh rare was the revel, and well
worth while

That made those glowering witch-men smile.

III. The Hope of their Religion

**Heavy bass. With a literal imitation
of camp-meeting racket, and trance.** A good old negro
in the slums of the town

Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.

Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,

His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.

Beat on the Bible till he wore it out

Starting the jubilee revival shout.

And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,

And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs,

And they all repented, a thousand strong

From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong

And slammed with their hymn books till they shook the
room

With "glory, glory, glory,"

And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

Exactly as in the first section.

Begin with terror and power, end with joy. THEN I SAW
THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil

And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.

In bright white steele they were seated round

And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.

And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high

Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—

Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand