

In the Subway

Mastin, Florence Ripley, 1886-1968

The pale-lipped workers do not move me so
As these complacent seekers after joy.
They never come to grips with anything;
Their soft hands have not touched the rough of life
That brings raw blood to the surface; they have felt
No stabbing lust for beauty or bold sin.
Warm furred and decent, smiling so dreamlessly,
They hurt my heart; their eyes, so unafraid,
Fill me with terror. God! they know it not,
But they are wistful—earth's most wistful ones!
The thin, dark workers, burned as though with fire,
Swaying in pallid sleep, and pinched with want,
Are not so pitiful, so stark as these.