

The Tropics in New York (1922)

Claude McKay

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger-root,
Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
And tangerines and mangoes and grapefruit,
Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,

Set in the window, bringing memories
Of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,
And dewy dawns, and mystical blue skies
In benediction over nun-like hills.

My eye grew dim, and I could no more gaze,
A wave of longing through my body swept,
And hungry for the old, familiar ways,
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

How does this poem compare to Brody's "Times Square"

(Sensory images from the present, especially of food and the hustle and bustle of the market and city streets, cause the speakers to remember their homelands, and the "old familiar ways." The speaker in "Times Square" remembers an apple given to him by a woman in the market. The speaker in "Tropics" migrated from a place where the fruits he sees in the market stalls grew on trees. The memories of home cause sadness.)