



## A Guilty Conscience

Beneath a slender cocoa palm  
 A negro lay at ease;  
 Beside him rose a fishing rod,  
 A bait can 'twixt his knees.  
 He dreamt of dear old Ireland,  
 That country brave and free,  
 And wished with all his heart  
 That he were far across the sea.

While thus his thoughts were roaming  
 On that lovely Emerald Isle,  
 He felt a tug, and woke to find  
 He'd hooked a crocodile.  
 The crocodile was peeved a bit,  
 As anyone could see;  
 The nigger soon observed this fact,  
 And hied him up a tree.

The reptile rose in boiling rage  
 And spread his wings to fly;  
 This may seem strange, but really, dear,  
 I wouldn't tell a lie.  
 He soared above the palm tree far,  
 And wheeled like any hawk,  
 Then opening his ugly throat  
 He squeaked a wicked squawk.

He shook the rattles on his tail,  
 And sang in fiendish glee,  
 As gracefully he swooped toward  
 The nigger in the tree.  
 Once more he spread his jaws apart,  
 And gobbled down the coon,  
 Who thought it was an awful shame  
 That he should die so soon.

As darkness closed above his head,  
 The darky woke again,  
 And found he'd tumbled in the creek,  
 Which soaked him to the skin.  
 And now in grim reality,  
 This time 'twas no delusion,  
 An ugly brute was just about  
 To jump at his conclusion.

He scrambled out with muffled shout,  
 His face was almost pasty;  
 He grabbed his rod and can of bait  
 And left with footsteps hasty.  
 Then running to the cornfield,  
 Where he should have been before,  
 He swore by seven orange cats  
 He'd shirk his work no more.

Moral: Don't fish with a guilty conscience.

W. C. W.