

CHAPTER  
**12**

Section 1

LITERATURE SELECTION

**“Justice Denied in Massachusetts”**  
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

*Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote this poem, which was published in **The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems (1928)**, after the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti. As you read the poem, think about its mood.*

Let us abandon then our gardens and go home  
And sit in the sitting-room.  
Shall the larkspur blossom or the corn grow under  
this cloud?  
Sour to the fruitful seed  
Is the cold earth under this cloud,  
Fostering quack and weed, we have marched upon  
but cannot conquer;  
We have bent the blades of our hoes against the  
stalks of them.

Let us go home, and sit in the sitting-room.  
Not in our day  
Shall the cloud go over and the sun rise as before,  
Beneficent upon us  
Out of the glittering bay,  
And the warm winds be blown inward from the sea  
Moving the blades of corn  
With a peaceful sound.  
Forlorn, forlorn,  
Stands the blue hay-rack by the empty mow.  
And the petals drop to the ground,

Leaving the tree unfruited.  
The sun that warmed our stooping backs and  
withered the weed uprooted—  
We shall not feel it again.  
We shall die in darkness, and be buried in the rain.

What from the splendid dead  
We have inherited—  
Furrows sweet to the grain, and the weed  
subdued—  
See now the slug and the mildew plunder.  
Evil does overwhelm  
The larkspur and the corn;  
We have seen them go under.

Let us sit here, sit still,  
Here in the sitting-room until we die;  
At the step of Death on the walk, rise and go;  
Leaving to our children's children this beautiful  
doorway,  
And this elm,  
And a blighted earth to till  
With a broken hoe.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does the poem's speaker feel after Sacco and Vanzetti are executed?
2. What images best convey the mood of this poem? Give examples.
3. Compare Millay's and Dos Passos's reactions to the Sacco and Vanzetti case.