"January in Louisiana! Already the first signs of Spring were manifesting themselves in the cabin door-yards: the paper-white narcissus and the German iris whose pale gray-green spikes are topped by a sort of disdainful white plume. In the transparent black waters of the bayous the indestructible cypress, symbol of silence and death, stands knee-deep. The sky is everywhere, dominating everything. How different the sky as one travels from region to region!... Always the live oak, the cypress, the chinaball tree; always the swamp, the clearing, the jungle; cotton, rice, sugar cane; thickets of bamboo, banana trees, gum trees, magnolias, cucumber trees, swamp myrtle, sassafras. A wild profusion of flowers: camellias, azaleas, roses of all kinds, salvias, the giant spider lily, the aspidistra, jasmine, Michaelmas daisies; snakes, screech-owls, raccoons; mounds of frightening dimensions, lurid, pregnant, heavy as mercury. And like a leit-motif to the immensity of sky are the tangled masses of Spanish moss, that peculiar spawn of the South which is allied to the pineapple family. An epiphyte, rather than a parasite, it lives an independent existence, sustaining itself on air and moisture; it flourishes just as triumphantly on a dead tree or a telegraph wire as on the live oak. 'None but the Chinese,' says Weeks Hall, 'can ever hope to paint this moss. It has a baffling secret of line and mass which has never been remotely approached. It is as difficult to do as a veronica. The live oaks tolerate it—they do not seem to be at one with it. But to the Louisiana cypress it seems to want to act as a bodyguard. A strange phenomenon.'"

"The Shadows"
Henry Miller