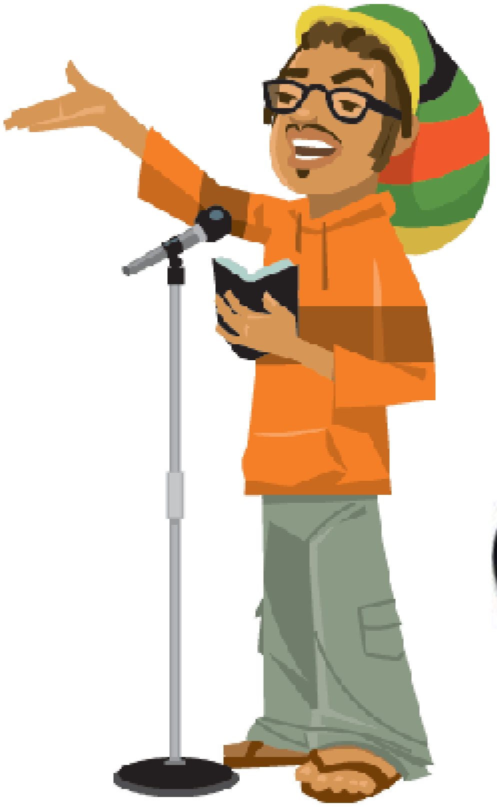
Poetry Unit



Are you a poet?

Middle School Harlem Renaissance Unit
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Unit Focus and Direction

This unit of study focuses on the **Harlem Renaissance**. Students are to be immersed in the literature, art, dance, and music of this period. The short stories and literature is meant to be used for the literary standards. The essays and speeches are meant to be taught, using the reading informational standards. Students are to demonstrate mastery of the standards by writing poetry or analysis of the works. Speaking and listening is also an intricate part of this using.

While it is important to include poetry in every unit of study, at times, it can be fun to focus solely on poetry. During this unit (2-4 weeks), students are immersed in poetry. They speak, listen to, write, and read poetry – individually and in groups. This sample unit framework can be used for middle and high school.

Links are embedded at the end of each piece of reading. To build engagement, please play the videos beforehand to build schema and background knowledge.

Poetry is meant to be read, heard, and enjoyed, rather than “studied.” Throughout the unit, read poems aloud daily and encourage students to read aloud poems of their choice. Ask students to respond to the words they hear and read in poems, and to picture the images that the words create.

Students may say, “I don’t get it,” and say that they do not like poetry because they are fearful that they do not understand the “correct meaning.” For some of us as teachers, we share the same fear. However, you are free to choose poetry of your own as long as it meets the needs of the standards. Encourage discussion about the poems and the students’ responses, making it clear that all responses are valid, and that each reader/listener makes meaning according to his or her own experiences and prior knowledge about poetry and the topic of the poem.

Poetry Immersion: Students will be introduced to a new poet daily or every two days, depending on the skills that are being taught. The teachers will tell students a few facts from the poet's biography as well as read some of his or her poetry. As the teacher reads the poems, he or she will introduce figurative language and poetic devices and forms. . For example, if the teacher reads Langston Hughes, "Mother to Son," in addition to some of his biographical facts, the teacher may teach metaphor, dialect, and repetition. The class would discuss analyze how the poem would be different if those elements were not included in this poem. Additionally, when teaching haiku, a teacher may read the students a haiku and teach the structure of a haiku and imagery together. Students would, then, have to write their own haikus based on the criteria taught to them. It is a very good idea to write poetry with your students as it is assigned. For example, if students are to write a poem using rhyme scheme, alliteration, repetition, and metaphors, then the teacher should also bring in a poem that he or she has attempted to write to share with students. This tends to motivate students even more.

Writing Poetry: Use models of various types of poetry and have students experiment with writing each type. Some types of poetry include haiku, limerick, lyric, sonnet, diamante, concrete, ballad, and free verse. Encourage students to go through the writing process just as they do when writing other genres.

Meet the Poet: Students will highlight the accomplishments of two poets, one who is assigned to them and one of their choice.

Teachers will assign each student a famous poet to research. Students will create a pamphlet, brochure, poster, billboard, radio or video commercial or some other creative mode to showcase the poet's biography. Students will do this without plagiarism and will include at least citations from at least three sources.

The teacher will read a selected poem and discuss it with the class. The teacher will, then, analyze the poem step by step WITH the class. Click the following link for directions: (https://www.teachforamerica.org/teacherpop/how-analyze-poem-6-steps). Students will also take an assigned poem and critically analyze it, using a graphic organizer. After completing the graphic organizer, the students will write the literary analysis. In this poetry analysis, students will identify the use and effect of figurative language and poetic devices like alliteration, similes, metaphors, allusions, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, symbolism, refrain, repetition, personification, hyperbole, etc. Students will write an analysis of each line or stanza.

After exposing the students to several different poets, have students select several poems by their favorite poet, then research the poet and share their findings with the class in written, oral, and/or visual form. Students will write a proposal on the poet on researched information using at least three references. Students will write and present a proposal explaining what makes the poet great. The student must write a formal report and synthesize his or her findings from that research to a PowerPoint presentation. The students will choose from the following two topics:

Why Students Must Read My Poet
Proposal for My Poet to Become Poet Laureate

Local/Georgia Poets: Students will be exposed to local poets from their own classroom and throughout the state of Georgia.

Culminating Activity: The class or cluster will have a poetry slam to showcase original poetry.

A poetry slam is a competition in which poets get up in front of the audience, perform an original poem and receive "Olympics" style scores from a group of judges. This lesson plan brings the excitement of a poetry slam to the classroom.

This lesson plan will involve students in defining, composing, practicing, performing and judging poetry. It will help them realize that poetry is a living art form--not just words on a page. Once students are introduced to various poetry devices, techniques, and forms, they are exposed to the origin, rules, judging, performance skills, and scoring involved in a poetry slam competition.

Culminating Product: Poetry Anthology will be the product. Because the anthology is comprised of several sections, the teachers should probably have certain deadlines for certain projects to be completed, so that students don't wait until the last minute and become overwhelmed.

Unit Standards

Following are standards that can be used with this unit. The speaking and listening standards are not included in this list; however, if you decide to do a poetry slam, spoken word, or an oral presentation, please include the speaking and listening standards as well. Highlighted standards are actually in pacing guide.

Sixth Grade Standards

ELAGSE6RL1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE6RL2 Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

ELAGSE6RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

ELAGSE6RL5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

ELAGSE6RL7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

ELAGSE6RL9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

ELAGSE6RI1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE6RI2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

ELAGSE6RI6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

ELAGSE6RI7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELAGSE6RI9 Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

ELAGSE6W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

a. Apply grade 6 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., "Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics").

ELAGSE6L5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.

ELAGSE6SL1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
d. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

7th Grade Standards

ELAGSE7RL1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE7RL2 Determine a theme and/or of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE7RL3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).

ELAGSE7RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

ELAGSE7RL5 Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

ELAGSE7RL6 Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

ELAGSE7RL7 Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

ELAGSE7RI1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE7RI2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE7RI4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

ELAGSE7RI5 Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

ELAGSE7RI6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

ELAGSE7RI7 Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

ELAGSE7W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

a. Apply grade 7 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., "Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history").

ELAGSE7L5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.

c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending)

ELAGSE7SL1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
c. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views and understanding

8th Grade Standards

ELAGSE8RL1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE8RL2 Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE8RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

ELAGSE8RL5 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

ELAGSE8RL9 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

ELAGSE8RI1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELAGSE8RI2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE8RI3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

ELAGSE8RI4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

ELAGSE8RI6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

ELAGSE8RI7 Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

ELAGSE8RI9 Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

ELAGSE8W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

a. Apply grade 8 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., "Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new").

ELAGSE8L5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

ELAGSE8SL1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers, elicit elaboration, and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding in light of the evidence presented.

Student Poetry Anthology

Section One:

Favorite Poet (Each student will choose his or her favorite poet to showcase).

A. Students will write a proposal for their favorite poet using one of the following topics:
   Why Students Must Read My Poet.
   Proposal for My Poet to Become Poet Laureate
   (Minimal of three sources which must be cited)
B. Students will research the poet's background and create a brochure, radio commercial, video commercial, or some other creative way of advertising their poets to others. Information that must be included is birth place, schools, influences of writing, famous poems, critics' opinions of poetry, etc.
C. Students will give a one minute oral presentation of the poet. Students will use PowerPoint to present material. PowerPoint presentation will be included in anthology.
D. This section will include 5 poems the student selects from the assigned poet.
E. Literary Analysis of one of the five poems. Poetry Analysis Template

Section Two:

Original Poetry (Each student will include 10 of his or her own poems).

A. Poetic forms to be included are I limerick, 1 haiku, I cinquain, I free verse poem, 1 poem using couplets, 1 narrative poem, 1 lyric poem, and the other three poems are the choice of the student. This poetry should reflect the figurative language and poetry devices that should have been taught during this unit: Similes, metaphors, alliteration, imagery, onomatopoeia, personification, symbolism, rhythm, rhyme scheme, repetition, refrain, assonance, consonance, hyperbole, couplets, and stanzas.
B. Students will write their own autobiography for this section (Included in this booklet).

Section Three:

Local Poetry (Each student will include 10 poems gathered from local poets). These may come from other students in the class since all students have to write 10 original poems or they may come from family members, friends, and others.

Ideas for a Poetry Slam

A poetry slam is an informal competition. At a slam, anyone can get on stage to read a poem - and the standards of quality rest entirely on the subjective appreciation of randomly chosen members of the audience, who rate poems, Olympic scoring-style, from 0 to 10. In this case, the students will have learned much about poetry through the four week unit, so the teacher could opt to have students' poetry rated on the studied elements of poetry. Students will choose their own performance poem from their anthology even if they don't plan to take part in the slam. They might be broken into small groups to practice. By the end of this section you'll need to get at least six students to volunteer to take part in the slam. You may choose to make everyone choose a poem to present. If students are not comfortable with their own poetry, you may allow them to read one of their favorite poems. This is also fun when teachers and other staff members participate.

A class session will be used for the poetry readings. This could also be something done as an after school program if the entire department is teaching this unit around the same time. This will truly teach students to enjoy the spoken word. You may choose to do this in a place with soft music, usually jazz, playing as the students read. Poetry slams are usually held in coffee houses, pubs or cafes. Having refreshments and soft music will set the mood for the slam. Teachers could either provide refreshments or have the students to bring in items for refreshments.

Students will judge the poets numerically as Olympic ice skaters are judged. Students will be judged from "0" to "10" based on the elements of poetry that the students have learned during the unit. These numbers will be placed on cards for the five randomly chosen (student) judges to hold up. Another student will average these and keep an official score card. The teacher may decide on prizes for the winner.

Sample Lessons

See ELA SharePoint for PowerPoint

Poetry
languages
stanzas
assonance
tone
patterns
diction
often
syllable
Lyric
genre
six
three
Genres
element
pentameter
Visual
Much
number
couplet
Sonnets
established
within
unstressed
use
Narrative
Metrical
forms
Drama
Jintishi
Poems
include
word
followed
couplets
History
Japanese
rather
specific
similar
Quatrain
Short
even
also
structure
sonnet
Arabic
generally
example
form
Prose
long
pattern
Poem
associated
common
two
create
Persian
formal
Modern
one
works
examples
line
Villanelle
well
lines
first
developed
Basic
sound
set
Ode
Classical
part
poet
poets
ancient
stanza
addition
end
Early
feet
written
rhyme
Satirical
writing
rhyming
alliteration
hexameter
words
may
poetic
Many
tradition
Five
less
elements
described
syllables
see
notable
based
epics
stressed
meaning
iambic
Tanka
English
Elegy
different
rhymes
vowel
Haiku
Verse
meter
Greek
Chinese
Ghazal
cultures
Main
among
related
century
regular
eight
traditions
structural
scheme
article
language
rima
Dramatic
structures
Epic
effect
edit
four
schemes
Literary
used
stress
foot
rhythm

Poetic Forms

Acrostic — Poetry in which the first letter of each line, when read vertically, spell out a word. The word is usually the subject of the poem.

Example: Vanilla

As I eat it on my brownie
Not doubting its sweet
Ice cream is a tasty treat
Lots of lingering taste
Lasting to the end
Always my favorite!

Haiku — An ancient Japanese form with no rhyme. Haiku often deals with nature. This type of poetry has three lines with a fixed number of syllables. How to write a haiku

Line 1 — 5 syllables
Line 2 — 7 syllables
Line 3 - 5 syllables

Example: The dying plant bends
And drips its dew to the ground
It falls like a tear.

Cinquain — A form consisting of five lines. Each has a required number of syllables, and a specific topic.

Line l: Title (noun) — 2 syllables
Line 2: Description 4 syllables
Line 3: Action — 6 syllables
Line 4: Feeling (phrase) — 8 syllables
Line 5: Title (synonym for the title) — 2 syllables

Example:

Flowers
Pretty, Fragrant
Waiting, watching, weeding
Enjoying all the while they grow
Gardens

Diamonte poems These diamond-shaped poems of seven lines are written using parts of speech. The diamonte is a form similar to the Cinquain.

Line 1: Noun or subject
Line 2: Two Adjectives
Line 3: Threee 'ing' words
Line 4: Four words about the subject
Line 5: Three 'ing' words
Line 6: Two Adjectives
Line 7: Synonym for subject

Example:

Home
Safe, caring
Loving, sharing, talking
Friendship, food, car, travels
Living, loving, enjoying
Joyous, adventurous
Family

Limericks — A silly, whimsical poem with five lines. It follows the A,A,B,B,A rhyme scheme. Lines one, two, and five have the same rhythm. Lines three and four have the same rhythm and a shorter number of beats than lines one, two, and five. Limerick worksheet

Example:
There once was a girl Selina,
Who wanted to be a ballerina.
She went on her toes,
And broke her nose.
Then she became cleaner.

Free Verse — Poetry without rules of form, rhyme, rhythm, or meter

Example:
What do the oceans do at night?
Do they tease and tickle the bottom of boats?
Do they ripple away in fright?
Or are the beaches like coats
That keep them still and quiet
And once the day breaks and it's breakfast time
Do the oceans wish for some other diet than fish?

Sonnets - Poems of 14 lines that begin with three quatrains and end with a couplet. The couplet usually contains a surprise ending or "turn." William Shakespeare is one of the most famous sonnet writers in history.
Why do we continue to kill in various ways?
Why do we waste time with jealousy and hate?
Why not take advantage of the current date?
Stop the violence now, don't let it grow.
Love is important, a fact that we all know. As the
fires of hate continue to burn
The hands of clock continue to turn.
No one can find reason to our madness today.
The gift of life is extremely short
Demand no more violence of any sort!
With kindness, life's quality we can improve!
As those hands on the clock continue to move. Day
becomes night and night becomes day
The hands of the clock keep ticking away.

Narrative poetry Poems that tell stories and are usually long. Epics and ballads are narrative poems.

There once was a man named Bob
Who was out looking for a great job He really
needed money to feed pets His cat's name was
Tiger His dog's name was Ted.
His pets were hungry most of the day
The animals were hungry - they couldn't play
Bob had been laid off for a month or two
There was plenty of work that Bob wouldn't do.
Bob was really hungry.
His stomach was an empty tank
He decided to go rob a local bank.
He walked through the door and looked around He pointed
his gun and yelled "Get down"
Bob took the money and headed for the door. If only he
had seen the officer in the store.
The policeman came out with a shout
Bob thought for a second and then pulled his gun out
One shot, two shots and with a deafening sound Poor old
Bob's body hit the ground.
With his last breath
He thought back to his pets
He sure hoped Tiger and Ted
Would have a great life after he was dead!

Lyric poetry – A lyric poem is a short poem in which single speaker expresses personal thoughts and feelings. Most poems other than dramatic and narrative poems are lyric poems. In ancient Greece, lyric poetry was meant to be sung. Modern lyrics are usually not intended for singing, but they are characterized by strong melodic rhythms. Lyric poetry has a variety of forms and covers many subjects, from love and death to everyday experiences.

This example of lyric poetry is a poem by Emily Dickinson named *I Felt a Funeral in my Brain*. It describes a person who is going insane, or thinks they are:

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading – treading – till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through –

And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum –
Kept beating – beating – till I thought
My Mind was going numb –

And then I heard them lift a Box
And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,
Then Space – began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
And I, and Silence, some strange Race
Wrecked, solitary, here –

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down –
And hit a World, at every plunge,
And Finished knowing – then –

Sound Devices and Other Poetic Terms

Sound devices enhance a poem's mood and meaning. Below are a few sound devices commonly used in poetry.

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the beginning of words, as in slippery slope.

Repetition is the use of any element of language — a sound, word, phrase, clause, or sentence — more than once.

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds followed by different consonants in stressed syllables, as in blade and maze.

Consonance is the repetition of similar consonant sounds at the ends of accented syllables, as in wind and sand.

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that imitate sounds. Crash, bang, and hiss are all examples of onomatopoeia.

Rhyme is the repetition of sounds at the ends of words, as in speech and teach.

Meter is the rhythmical pattern in a poem.

Refrain is a regularly repeated line or group of lines in a poem or song.

Rhyme Scheme is a regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem. To indicate the rhyme scheme of a poem, one uses lowercase letters. Each rhyme is assigned a different letter, as follows in the first stanza of "Dust of Snow," by Robert Frost.

The way a crow a
Shook down on me b
The dust of snow a
From a hemlock tree b

Couplet is two consecutive lines of a verse with end rhymes. Often, a couplet functions as a stanza.

Stanza is a group of lines of poetry that are usually similar in length and pattern and are separated by spaces. A stanza is like a paragraph of poetry — it states and develops a single main idea.

Figurative Language

Allusion: A reference in a work of literature to a character, place, or situation from another work of literature. (A Text to Text connection)

Simile is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things, using the words like or as. "His feet were as big as boats."

Metaphor is a figure of speech using a direct comparison of two unlike things, without the use of like or as. "Writing is my world."

Extended Metaphor: The term "extended metaphor" refers to a comparison between two unlike things that continues throughout a series of sentences in a paragraph, or lines in a poem. It is often comprised of more than one sentence, and sometimes consists of a full paragraph.

Hope is the Thing with Feathers (By Emily Dickenson)

"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune – without the words,
And never stops at all,

"And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

"I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me."

Personification is a type of figurative language in which a nonhuman subject is given human characteristics.
"The rain angrily beat down on the small hut."
Emily Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop Death" is another great example of personification.

Pun is a group of words with a humorous double meaning, a "play on words." "A dog not only has afur coat but also pants.

Oxymoron is a figure of speech that links two opposite or contradictory words, to point out an idea or situation that seems confradictory or inconsistent, but on closer inspection turns out to be somehow true. Bittersweet, Wise fool

Imagery is the "word pictures" that writers create to evoke an emotional response. In creating effective images, writers use sensory details, or descriptions that appeal to one or more of the five senses. In the following lines from "Snow," Julia Alvarez uses visual imagery to make a scene vivid to the reader:

All my life I had heard about the white crystals
That fell out of the American skies in the winter. From my
desk I watched the fine powder dust The sidewalk and
parked cars below.

Symbol is any object, person, place, or experience that exists on a literal level but also represents, or stands for, something else, usually something abstract. In Carl Sandburg's "Chicago," the hog, butcher, tool maker, and stacker of wheat symbolize the city of Chicago.

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that uses exaggeration to express strong emotion, to make a point, or to evoke humor. "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.

Allusion is a reference to a well-known character, place, or situation from history or from music, art, or another work of literature. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T.S. Elliot alludes Michelangelo, Lazarus, and Hamlet.

Cliché is a word or phrase that is so overused that it is virtually meaningless. "Piece of Cake"

Idiom is an expression that has a meaning different from the meaning of its individual words. For example, “to go to the dogs” is an idiom meaning “to go to ruin.”

Autobiography Outline

Paragraph 1 Introduction:

Topics you might want to cover in your first paragraph.

- Birth date, place and interesting story
- Parents
- Brothers, sisters, pets
- Why you were given your name
- Where you are from and ethnicity
- Hobbies

Paragraph 2 beginning years:

Topics to consider

- Where you grew up
- First days of school
- First memories
- First friends
- Vacations
- Funny memory or story
- Early holidays

Paragraph 3 elementary school years:

Topics to consider

- Where you went to school
- Birthday or vacation
- Funny story
- Friends
- Sports or interests
- Freedoms
- Activities

Paragraph 4 present school years:

Topics to consider

- Where you went to school and changes
- First day and new friends
- Funny story
- Cell phones
- Sports or interests
- License
- Activities

Paragraph 5 future plans:

Topics to consider

- College
- Work
- Family
- Travel

Graphic Organizer for Biographies

Who was____?

Famous For: ____

Childhood

Place of Birth:_____________________________Birthdate: _______________

Childhood Events: ____

Key Life Events:

____

____

____

____

Major Accomplishments:

Your Favorite Song:

What did you like the most about it.

SWBAT Analyze Imagery in Poetry and its relationship to Mood (emotion)

A Blessing

By: James Wright

Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,
Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.
And the eyes of those two Indian ponies
Darken with kindness.
They have come gladly out of the willows
To welcome my friend and me.
We step over the barbed wire into the pasture
Where they have been grazing all day, alone.
They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness
That we have come.
They bow shyly as wet swans.
They love each other.
There is no loneliness like theirs.
At home once more,
They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.
I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,
For she has walked over to me
And nuzzled my left hand.
She is black and white,
Her mane falls wild on her forehead,
And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear
That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist.
Suddenly I realize
That if I stepped out of my body
I would break
Into blossom.

Imagery Quote from Poem	Explanation of the Image	Emotion felt from the Image (mood)
• Twilight bounds softy forth on the grass	• The sky is changing colors and everything looks beautiful	• Cheerful, peaceful, romantic
• They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness	• The horses are nervous but overjoyed to see the visitors	• Excited
• And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist	• The horse's ear is extremely soft	• Warm, comforted, gushing

What MOOD is created through the imagery in the poem? Use examples of imagery to support your response.

The mood in the poem "Blessing" is joyous and comfortable. The author expresses this mood in the imagery, "Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass" creating an image of a peaceful sunset. Furthermore, the author says, "…caress her long ear that is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist" which makes the reader feel the warm and comfortable touch of a horse. Finally, the reader sees the author using imagery to create an overall mood of a joyful encounter with the horses in nature.

SWBAT Analyze Imagery in Poetry and its relationship to Mood (emotion)

"Daffodils" by William Wordsworth

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: -
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

Imagery Quote from Poem	Explanation of the Image	Emotion felt from the Image (mood)

Tone = speaker's attitude

POSITIVE TONE WORDS

admiring
adoring
affectionate
appreciative
approving
bemused
benevolent
blithe
calm
casual
celebratory
cheerful
comforting
comic
compassionate
complimentary
conciliatory
confident
contented
delightful
earnest
ebullient
ecstatic
effusive
elated
empathetic
encouraging
euphoric
excited
exhilarated
expectant
facetious
fervent
flippant
forthright
friendly
funny
gleeful
gushy
happy
hilarious
hopeful
humorous
interested
introspective
jovial
joyful
laudatory
light
lively
mirthful
modest
nostalgic
optimistic
passionate
placid
playful
poignant
proud
reassuring
reflective
relaxed
respectful
reverent
romantic
sanguine
scholarly
self-assured
sentimental
serene
silly
sprightly
straightforward
sympathetic
tender
tranquil
whimsical
wistful
worshipful
zealous

NEUTRAL

(+, -, or neutral)

commanding
direct
impartial
indirect
meditative
objective
questioning
speculative
unambiguous
unconcerned
understated

NEGATIVE TONE WORDS

abhorring
acerbic
ambiguous
ambivalent
angry
annoyed
antagonistic
anxious
apathetic
apprehensive
belligerent
bewildered
biting
bitter
blunt
bossy
cold
conceited
condescending
confused
contemptuous
curt
cynical
demanding
depressed
derisive
derogatory
desolate
despairing
desperate
detached
diabolic
disappointed
disliking
disrespectful
doubtful
embarrassed
enraged
evasive
fatalistic
fearful
forceful
foreboding
frantic
frightened
frustrated
furious
gloomy
grave
greedy
grim
harsh
haughty
holier-than-thou
hopeless
hostile
impatient
incredulous
indifferent
indignant
inflammatory
insecure
insolent
irreverent
lethargic
melancholy
mischievous
miserable
mocking
mournful
nervous
ominous
outraged
paranoid
pathetic
patronizing
pedantic
pensive
pessimistic
pretentious
psychotic
resigned
reticent
sarcastic
sardonic
scornful
self-deprecating
selfish
serious
severe
sinister
skeptical
sly
solemn
somber
stern
stolid
stressful
strident
suspicious
tense
threatening
tragic
uncertain
uneasy
unfriendly
unsympathetic
upset
violent
wry

Mood = emotional effect that the text creates for the audience

POSITIVE MOOD WORDS

amused
awed
bouncy
calm
cheerful
chipper
confident
contemplative
content
determined
dignified
dreamy
ecstatic
empowered
energetic
enlightened
enthralled
excited
exhilarated
flirty
giddy
grateful
harmonious
hopeful
hyper
idyllic
joyous
jubilant
liberating
light-hearted
loving
mellow
nostalgic
optimistic
passionate
peaceful
playful
pleased
refreshed
rejuvenated
relaxed
relieved
satiated
satisfied
sentimental
silly
surprised
sympathetic
thankful
thoughtful
touched
trustful
vivacious
warm
welcoming

NEGATIVE MOOD WORDS

aggravated
annoyed
anxious
apathetic
apprehensive
barren
brooding
cold
confining
confused
cranky
crushed
cynical
depressed
desolate
disappointed
discontented
distressed
drained
dreary
embarrassed
enraged
envious
exhausted
fatalistic
foreboding
frustrated
futile
gloomy
grumpy
haunting
heartbroken
hopeless
hostile
indifferent
infuriated
insidious
intimidated
irate
irritated
jealous
lethargic
lonely
melancholic
merciless
moody
morose
nauseated
nervous
nightmarish
numb
overwhelmed
painful
pensive
pessimistic
predatory
rejected
restless
scared
serious
sick
somber
stressed
suspenseful
tense
terrifying
threatening
uncomfortable
vengeful
violent
worried

Poetry Analysis Template ________________________________

Categories	Example
Title: What is the significance of the title?	
Summary: Write a paragraph or so summarizing the events/emotions discussed in the poem.	
Setting: If applicable, what is the setting of the poem?	
Speaker: Who is the person "telling" the poem? What attitude does the speaker have? What is it like? Use examples to support your claim. ** Please remember that if the voice of the poem says "I", that doesn't mean it is the author who is speaking!	
Audience: Who is the speaker speaking to? How do you know?	

Mood and Tone: What is the tone of the speaker in the poem? What is the overall mood of the poem? What examples from the text support your claims? Do you see a shift in either?	
Figurative Language: Which types of figurative language are present in your poem? Identify them and pick several examples of how that technique was used.	
Theme: What do you think is the author's message of the poem? What does he/she want the reader to believe or understand after reading?	

Use the following to analyze a poem.

Introduction to Poetry

BY BILLY COLLINS

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

Poetry Analysis Format

Categories	**Example**
Title: What is the significance of the title?	"Introduction to Poetry" is the title of the poem for a few reasons. One, the word "Introduction" makes it clear that the people who are looking at poetry don't have much experience with it. It also sounds like it could be the title of a college class for beginner poetry.
Summary: Write a paragraph or so summarizing the events/emotions discussed in the poem.	The speaker is relating the difference between what he wants his students to get from poetry and the process through which the students analyze. He wants the students to experience the poetry in a more emotional and personal way and he says that the students just want to try to figure out what it "means."
Setting: If applicable, what is the setting of the poem?	The setting of the poem isn't entirely clear, but it could be a classroom. In my opinion, I think it's more likely that the speaker is outside of his classroom (a home? An office?) and is thinking about his experiences in the classroom.
Speaker: Who is the person "telling" the poem? What attitude does the speaker have? What is it like? Use examples to support your claim. ** Please remember that if the voice of the poem says "I", that doesn't mean it	The speaker is a teacher or a professor, most likely a professor of English. I think he is a person who loves poetry, because he seems to want to share the fun, creative, curious process of poetry analysis ("I want them to waterski/across the surface of a poem/waving at the author's name on the shore" seems to indicate that he actually has a personal relationship with poetry). He also seems frustrated with how his students are responding, because the word choice of "But all they want to do/is tie the poem to a chair with rope/and

is the author who is speaking!	torture a confession out of it" indicates that he does not like the way they analyze poetry.
Audience: Who is the speaker speaking to? How do you know?	I'm not sure who he's speaking to, but I think it seems like he's speaking to an audience that would side more with his view of poetry (that it's personal, nebulous, and fun) because otherwise they wouldn't see the disappointment of the student format of analysis.
Mood and Tone: What is the tone of the speaker in the poem? What is the overall mood of the poem? What examples from the text support your claims? Do you see a shift in either?	In the beginning of the poem, it seems like the speaker is demonstrating a reverence and a sense of wonder for poems. He shows that with his use of phrases like, "I say drop a mouse into a poem/and watch him probe his way out," that show almost a fantastical approach to poetry analysis. If the speaker felt that poetry was a cut and dry medium that had one right answer, I don't think he would focus so much on the *experience* of poetry reading. The shift in tone occurs at the lines, "But all they want to do/is tie the poem to a chair with rope/and torture a confession out of it." The word "but" shows a change from the idealistic view he had in the beginning to the reality of the students' reading experience. He chooses imagery of torture ("rope," "confession," and, well, "torture") to indicate how dramatically different his students see the process of reading poetry.
Figurative Language: Which types of figurative language are present in your poem? Identify them and pick several	The poem is most noticeable for its use of imagery, particularly visual imagery. The poet uses "light" in two different occasions ("I ask them to take a poem/and hold it up to the light" and "walk inside the poem's room/and feel the walls for a light switch") and I think this is because he's trying to share the process of

examples of how that technique was used.	bringing knowledge to a poem, or, bringing "light" to the poem (so an example of light being use as a symbol). He also uses personification throughout the poem to effectively give life to a poem. I think he does this because he wants to express the idea that a poem is a living thing, not *just* words on a page. "They begin beating it with a hose/to find out what it really means" shows the poem as a torture victim, which communicates an idea that the students miss the real purpose of the poem. Lastly, the poem employs multiple metaphors, although most are indirect. For example, poems are compared to color slides (technically a simile- "I ask them to take a poem/and hold it up to the light/like a color slide"), a beehive (an image of frenzied activity- "press an ear against its hive"), a maze (an image of confusion and mystery- "I say drop a mouse into a poem/and watch him probe his way out"), and a body of water (again, an image of mystery and "hidden depths"- "I want them to waterski/across the surface of a poem/waving at the author's name on the shore").
Theme: What do you think is the author's message of the poem? What does he/she want the reader to believe or understand after reading?	I believe Billy Collins wants his readers to understand that there's not just one right way to read a poem. I think he sees that there is a common misconception that there is only one right view of a poem, and because of that, students beat a poem to death metaphorically trying to find "the answer." I think Collins is saying that if we just experience a poem rather than trying to "answer" a poem we're more likely to enjoy and understand poetry.

Determining Theme Organizer

Credit: Write Score

DIRECTIONS: Use the graphic organizer below to record details from the text that help reveal the theme.

Paragraph	Summarize each section.	What ideas about life are revealed in the story?
1		
2		
3		
4		

What overarching theme is conveyed in the text?

Explain how the interaction between characters in the text develop the theme over the course of the story.

ANALYZING WORDS AND PHRASES

DIRECTIONS: Use the graphic organizer below to record examples of figurative language and the use of sound devices. Then jot down ideas about the impact of each.

	Example from Text	Impact
Figurative Language: (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.)		
Sound Devices: (rhyme, repetition, alliteration, etc.)		

Explain how the use of figurative language and sound devices impact the poem. Use textual evidence to support your thinking.

DIRECTIONS: Use the graphic organizer below to jot down ideas about how each section fits into the overall structure of the text and helps develop the key concept.

Graphic Organizer for Text Structure

TEXT STRUCTURE: ____

KEY CONCEPT: ____

Section	Explanation/Signal Words
Introduction	
Section	
Section	
Section	
Conclusion	

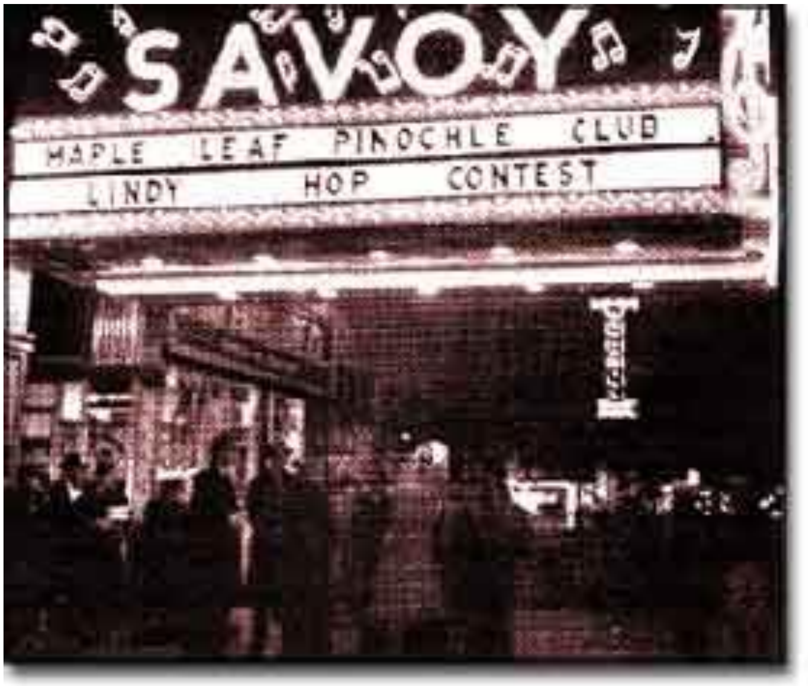
How does the author use structure to develop ideas? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

Point of View Graphic Organizer

	Zora	**Others Characters' POV of Her**
Point of view What does the narrator/character think/feel? What is his/her attitude?		
Textual Evidence What does the character do, say, or think? How does the author describe the character? What details are used?		

Does Zora's POV change? If so, how does Zora's point of view change over time? Cite textual evidence.

What was the Harlem Renaissance?



The Savoy Ballroom in Harlem in 1926 was The Place and Lindy Hop was The Dance!

With the end of the Civil War in 1865, hundreds of thousands of African Americans newly freed from the yoke of slavery in the South began to dream of fuller participation in American society, including political empowerment, equal economic opportunity, and economic and cultural self-determination.

Unfortunately, by the late 1870s, that dream was largely dead, as white supremacy was quickly restored to the Reconstruction South. White lawmakers on state and local levels passed strict racial segregation laws known as “Jim Crow laws” that made African Americans second-class citizens. While a small number of African Americans were able to become landowners, most were exploited as sharecroppers, a system designed to keep them poor and powerless. Hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) perpetrated lynchings and conducted campaigns of terror and intimidation to keep African Americans from voting or exercising other fundamental rights.

Economies were really booming across the North and Midwest offering industrial jobs for workers of every race. For this reason, many African Americans realized their hopes for a better standard of living—and a more racially tolerant environment—lay outside the South. By the turn of the 20th century, the Great Migration was underway as hundreds of thousands of African Americans relocated to cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Philadelphia, and New York. The Harlem section of Manhattan, which covers just three square miles, drew nearly 175,000 African Americans, giving the neighborhood the largest concentration of black people in the world. Harlem became a destination for African Americans of all backgrounds. From unskilled laborers to an educated middle-class, they shared common experiences of slavery, emancipation, and racial oppression, as well as a determination to forge a new identity as free people.

COTTON CLUB
AVIS ANDREWS
HENRI WESSELL
KALDAN
DYNAMITE JOE
ANN LEWIS
WHYTE MANIACS
The WORLD FAMOUS
COTTON CLUB
BILL ROBINSON
COTTON CLUB PARADE
50 SEPIAN STARS
DINNER $1.50
3 SHOWS
COTTON CLUB
COTTON CLUB
BUCKLEY BEAUTY SALON
MANICURE 35¢
SANDWICHES
Thelma Shop FROCKS GOWNS
PUBLIC HACK STAND TAXICABS

Consequently, the Great Migration drew to Harlem some of the greatest minds and brightest talents of the day, an astonishing array of African American artists and scholars. Between the end of World War I and the mid-1930s, they produced one of the most significant eras of cultural expression in the nation's history—the Harlem Renaissance. Yet this cultural explosion also occurred in Cleveland, Los Angeles and many cities shaped by the great migration. Alain Locke, a Harvard-educated writer, critic, and teacher who became known as the "dean" of the Harlem Renaissance, described it as a "spiritual coming of age" in which African Americans transformed "social disillusionment to race pride."

The Harlem Renaissance encompassed poetry and prose, painting and sculpture, jazz and swing, opera and dance. What united these diverse art forms was their realistic presentation of what it meant to be black in America, what writer Langston Hughes called an "expression of our individual dark-skinned selves," as well as a new militancy in asserting their civil and political rights.

Among the Renaissance's most significant contributors were intellectuals W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Cyril Briggs, and Walter Francis White; electrifying performers Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson; writers and poets Zora Neale

Hurston, Effie Lee Newsome, Countee Cullen; visual artists Aaron Douglas and Augusta Savage; and an extraordinary list of legendary musicians, including Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Eubie Blake, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Ivie Anderson, Josephine Baker, Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, and countless others.

At the height of the movement, Harlem was the epicenter of American culture. The neighborhood bustled with African American-owned and run publishing houses and newspapers, music companies, playhouses, nightclubs, and cabarets. The literature, music, and fashion they created defined culture and "cool" for blacks and white alike, in America and around the world.

As the 1920s came to a close, so did the Harlem Renaissance. Its heyday was cut short largely due to the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and resulting Great Depression, which hurt African American-owned businesses and publications and made less financial support for the arts available from patrons, foundations, and theatrical organizations.

However, the Harlem Renaissance's impact on America was indelible. The movement brought notice to the great works of African American art, and inspired and influenced future generations of African American artists and intellectuals. The self-portrait of African American life, identity, and culture that emerged from Harlem was transmitted to the world at large, challenging the racist and disparaging stereotypes of the Jim Crow South. In doing so, it radically redefined how people of other races viewed African Americans and understood the African American experience.

Most importantly, the Harlem Renaissance instilled in African Americans across the country a new spirit of self-determination and pride, a new social consciousness, and a new commitment to political activism, all of which would provide a foundation for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In doing so, it validated the beliefs of its founders and leaders like Alain Locke and Langston Hughes that art could be a vehicle to improve the lives of the African Americans.

Credit: https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/new-african-american-identity-harlem-renaissance

Video about the Harlem Renaissance: https://youtu.be/SkTVYtjKiF8

Video about the Great Migration and Harlem Renaissance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AQeRITMhD0

The Great Migration (1915-1960)

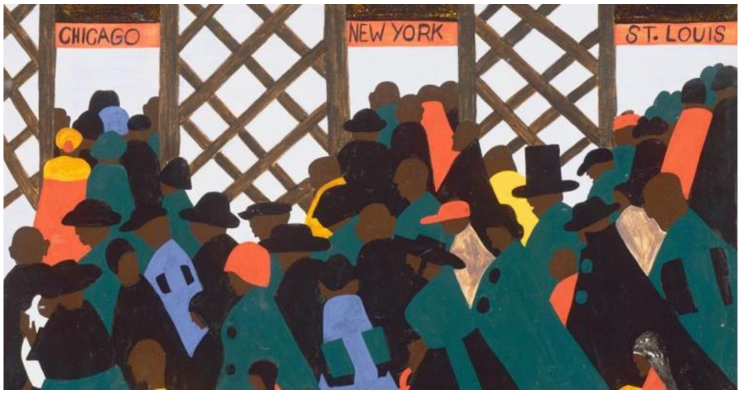
Black Family Arrives in Chicago from the South, CA 1919

Public Domain Image, Courtesy New York Public Library (1168439)

The Great Migration was the mass movement of about five million southern blacks to the north and west between 1915 and 1960. During the initial wave the majority of migrants moved to major northern cities such as Chicago, Illiniois, Detroit, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and New York, New York. By World War II the migrants continued to move North but many of them headed west to Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, California, Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington.

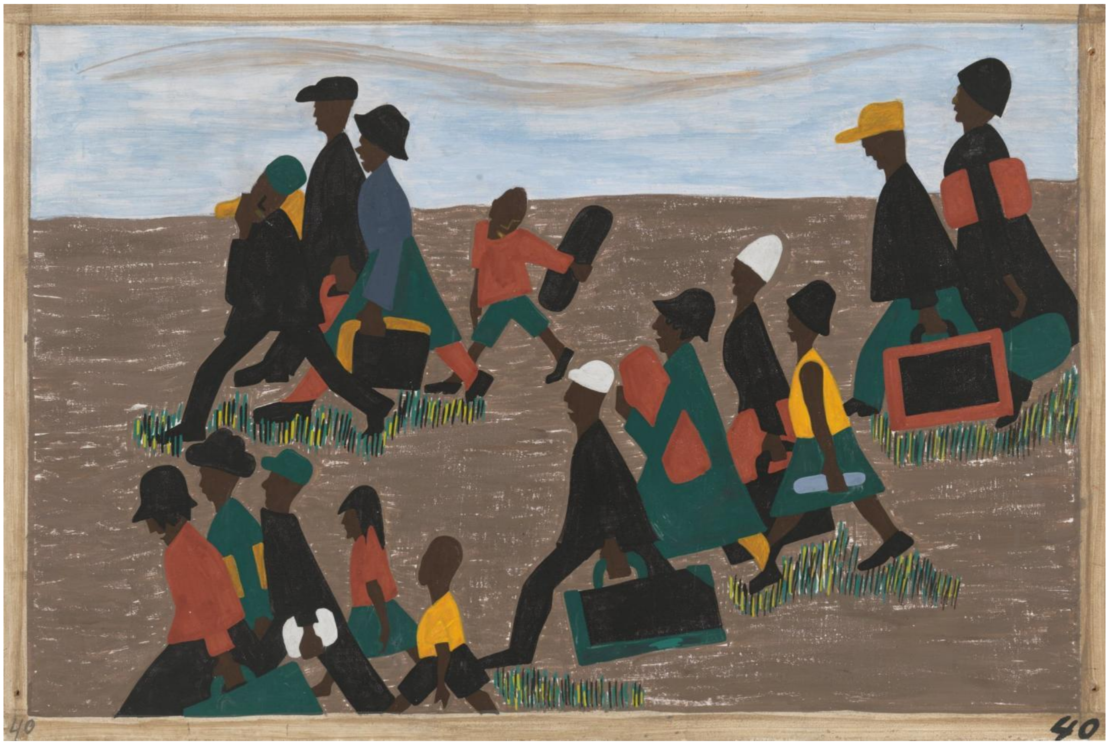
The first large movement of blacks occurred during World War I, when 454,000 black southerners moved north. In the 1920s, another 800,000 blacks left the south, followed by 398,000 blacks in the 1930s. Between 1940 and 1960 over 3,348,000 blacks left the south for northern and western cities.

The economic motivations for migration were a combination of the desire to escape oppressive economic conditions in the south and the promise of greater prosperity in the north. Since their Emancipation from slavery, southern rural blacks had suffered in a plantation economy that offered little chance of advancement. While a few blacks were lucky enough to purchase land, most were sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or farm labors, barely subsiding from year to year. When World War I created a huge demand for



workers in northern factories, many southern blacks took this opportunity to leave the oppressive economic conditions in the south.

The northern demand for workers was a result of the loss of 5 million men who left to serve in the armed forces, as well as the restriction of foreign immigration. Some sectors of the economy were so desperate for workers at this time that they would pay for blacks to migrate north. The Pennsylvania Railroad needed workers so badly that it paid the travel expenses of 12,000 blacks. The Illinois Central Railroad, along with many steel mills, factories, and tanneries, similarly provided free railroad passes for blacks. World War I was the first time since Emancipation that black labor was in demand outside of the agricultural south, and the economic promise was enough for many blacks to overcome substantial challenges to migrate.



In additional to migrating for job opportunities, blacks also moved north in order to escape the oppressive conditions of the south. Some of the main social factors for migration included lynching, an unfair legal system, inequality in education, and denial of suffrage.

The great migration, one of the largest internal migrations in the history of the United States, changed forever the urban North, the rural South, African America and in many respects, the entire nation.

Credit: BlackPast.org
Art: Jacob Lawrence
Video Account of the Great Migration: https://youtu.be/zRTjb5wW2R0
Video about The Great Migration: https://youtu.be/nAVqGxqkMB4
Read Aloud on The Great Migration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfnHFzqZU1M

Harlem Renaissance Writers

Langston Hughes
(1902-1967)

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. His parents divorced when he was a young child, and his father moved to Mexico. He was raised by his grandmother until he was thirteen, when he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her husband, before the family eventually settled in Cleveland, Ohio. It was in Lincoln that Hughes began writing poetry. After graduating from high school, he spent a year in Mexico followed by a year at Columbia University in New York City. During this time, he held odd jobs such as assistant cook, launderer, and busboy. He also travelled to Africa and Europe working as a seaman. In November 1924, he moved to Washington, D. C. Hughes's first book of poetry, The Weary Blues, (Knopf, 1926) was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926. He finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later. In 1930 his first novel, Not Without Laughter, (Knopf, 1930) won the Harmon gold medal for literature.

Hughes, who claimed Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Carl Sandburg, and Walt Whitman as his primary influences, is particularly known for his insightful, colorful portrayals of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties. He wrote novels, short stories and plays, as well as poetry, and is also known for his engagement with the world of jazz and the influence it had on his writing, as in his book-length poem Montage of a Dream Deferred (Holt, 1951). His life and work were enormously important in shaping the artistic contributions of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Unlike other notable black poets of the period—Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Countee Cullen—Hughes refused to differentiate between his personal experience and the common experience of black America. He wanted to tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including both their suffering and their love of music, laughter, and language itself.

The critic Donald B. Gibson noted in the introduction to Modern Black Poets: A Collection of Critical Essays (Prentice Hall, 1973) that Hughes "differed from most of his predecessors among black poets . . . in that he addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people. During the twenties when most American poets were turning inward, writing obscure and esoteric poetry to an ever decreasing audience of readers, Hughes was turning outward, using language and themes, attitudes and ideas familiar to anyone who had the ability simply to read . . . Until the time of his death, he spread his message humorously—though always seriously—to audiences throughout the country, having read his poetry to more people (possibly) than any other American poet."

In addition to leaving us a large body of poetic work, Hughes wrote eleven plays and countless works of prose, including the well-known "Simple" books: Simple Speaks His Mind, (Simon & Schuster, 1950); Simple Stakes a Claim, (Rinehart, 1957); Simple Takes a Wife, (Simon & Schuster, 1953); and Simple's Uncle Sam (Hill and Wang, 1965). He edited the anthologies The Poetry of the Negro and The Book of Negro Folklore, wrote an acclaimed autobiography, The Big Sea (Knopf, 1940), and co-wrote the play Mule Bone (HarperCollins, 1991) with Zora Neale Hurston.

Langston Hughes died of complications from prostate cancer on May 22, 1967, in New York City. In his memory, his residence at 20 East 127th Street in Harlem has been given landmark status by the New York City Preservation Commission, and East 127th Street has been renamed "Langston Hughes Place."

Videos

Biography: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkEKcQ81oS8
“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” Read by Langston Hughes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cKDOGhghMU
“The Weary Blues” Read by Langston Hughes with a jazz band
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uM7HSOwJw20
“I, Too” Read by Langston Hughes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CUKyVrhPgM

“Let America Be America Again” Read by teen at poetry slam
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-DVIwLQyj4
“Mother to Son” Recited by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
https://youtu.be/ko7w_cFvbO0
“Mother to Son” Recited by Viola Davis
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L-kKxePGqA
“Harlem” Recited by Danny Glover
https://youtu.be/LYKiXg4rNOY

Madam and the Phone Bill

You say I O.K.ed
LONG DISTANCE?
O.K.ed it when?
My goodness, Central
That was then!

I'm mad and disgusted
With that Negro now.
I don't pay no REVERSED
CHARGES nohow.

You say, I will pay it—
Else you'll take out my phone?
You better let
My phone alone.

I didn't ask him
To telephone me.
Roscoe knows darn well
LONG DISTANCE
Ain't free.

If I ever catch him,
Lawd, have pity!
Calling me up
From Kansas City.

Just to say he loves me!
I knowed that was so.
Why didn't he tell me some'n
I don't know?

For instance, what can
Them other girls do
That Alberta K. Johnson
Can't do—and more, too?

What's that, Central?
You say you don't care
Nothing about my
Private affair?

Well, even less about your
PHONE BILL, does I care!

Un-humm-m! . . . Yes!
You say I gave my O.K.?
Well, that O.K. you may keep—
But I sure ain't gonna pay!

Dreams (Good for Metaphor)

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Mother to Son **(Good for metaphor, free verse, repetition, imagery, dialect)**

Well, son, I’ll tell you:
Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
It’s had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I’se been a-climbin’ on,
And reachin’ landin’s,
And turnin’ corners,
And sometimes goin’ in the dark
Where there ain’t been no light.
So boy, don’t you turn back.
Don’t you set down on the steps
’Cause you finds it’s kinder hard.
Don’t you fall now—
For I’se still goin’, honey,
I’se still climbin’,
And life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.

Life is Fine

I went down to the river,
I set down on the bank.
I tried to think but couldn't,
So I jumped in and sank.

I came up once and hollered!
I came up twice and cried!
If that water hadn't a-been so cold
I might've sunk and died.

But it was Cold in that water! It was cold!

I took the elevator
Sixteen floors above the ground.
I thought about my baby
And thought I would jump down.

I stood there and I hollered!
I stood there and I cried!
If it hadn't a-been so high
I might've jumped and died.

But it was High up there! It was high!

So since I'm still here livin',
I guess I will live on.
I could've died for love—
But for livin' I was born

Though you may hear me holler,
And you may see me cry—
I'll be dogged, sweet baby,
If you gonna see me die.

Life is fine! Fine as wine! Life is fine!

The Weary Blues (good for onomatopoeia, repetition, alliteration, rhythm, rhyme scheme, imagery)

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway . . .
He did a lazy sway . . .
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—
"Ain't got nobody in all this world,
Ain't got nobody but ma self.
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
"I got the Weary Blues
And I can't be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can't be satisfied—
I ain't happy no mo'
And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

I, Too (good for allusion, free verse)

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed.

Let America Be America Again (good for symbolism, repetition, rhyme scheme)

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed--
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek--
And finding only the same old stupid plan
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,
Tangled in that ancient endless chain
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!
Of work the men! Of take the pay!
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.
I am the worker sold to the machine.
I am the Negro, servant to you all.
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean--
Hungry yet today despite the dream.
Beaten yet today--O, Pioneers!
I am the man who never got ahead,
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,
That even yet its mighty daring sings
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned
That's made America the land it has become.
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas
In search of what I meant to be my home--
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?

Surely not me? The millions on relief today?
The millions shot down when we strike?
The millions who have nothing for our pay?
For all the dreams we've dreamed
And all the songs we've sung
And all the hopes we've held
And all the flags we've hung,
The millions who have nothing for our pay--
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again--
The land that never has been yet--
And yet must be--the land where every man is free.
The land that's mine--the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME--
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose--
The steel of freedom does not stain.
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,
We must take back our land again,
America!

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath--
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain--
All, all the stretch of these great green states--
And make America again!

Harlem (good for simile; imagery)

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore--
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Democracy

Democracy will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my two feet
And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.
I do not need my freedom when I'm dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.

I live here, too.
I want freedom
Just as you

Theme for English B

The instructor said,

Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you—
Then, it will be true.

I wonder if it's that simple?
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.
I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you.
hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, talk on this page.
(I hear New York, too.) Me—who?

Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.
I guess being colored doesn't make me not like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?
Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white—
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me—
although you're older—and white—
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

Thank You, Ma'am (by Langston Hughes)

She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance so, intsead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up. the large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here." She still held him. But she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."

The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?"

The boy said, "I didn't aim to."

She said, "You a lie!"

By that time two or three people passed, stopped, turned to look, and some stood watching.

"If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the woman.

"Yes'm," said the boy.

"Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman. She did not release him.

"I'm very sorry, lady, I'm sorry," whispered the boy.

"Um-hum! And your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?"

"No'm," said the boy.

"Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her.

He looked as if he were fourteen or fifteen, frail and willow-wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.

The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"

"No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want you to turn me loose."

"Was I bothering you when I turned that corner?" asked the woman.

"No'm."

"But you put yourself in contact with me," said the woman. "If you think that that contact is not going to last awhile, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones."

Sweat popped out on the boy's face and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half-nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street.

When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still had him by the neck in the middle of her room.

She said, “What is your name?”

“Roger,” answered the boy.

“Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face,” said the woman, whereupon she turned him loose—at last. Roger looked at the door—looked at the woman—looked at the door—and went
to the sink.

Let the water run until it gets warm,” she said. “Here’s a clean towel.”

“You gonna take me to jail?” asked the boy, bending over the sink.

“Not with that face, I would not take you nowhere,” said the woman. “Here I am trying to get home to cook me a bite to eat and you snatch my pocketbook! Maybe, you ain’t been to your supper either, late as it be. Have you?”

“There’s nobody home at my house,” said the boy.

“Then we’ll eat,” said the woman, “I believe you’re hungry—or been hungry—to try to snatch my pockekbook.”

“I wanted a pair of blue suede shoes,” said the boy.

“Well, you didn’t have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes,” said Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. “You could of asked me.”

“M’am?”

The water dripping from his face, the boy looked at her. There was a long pause. A very long pause. After he had dried his face and not knowing what else to do dried it again, the boy turned around, wondering what next. The door was open. He could make a dash for it down the hall. He could run, run, run, run, run!

The woman was sitting on the day-bed. After a while she said, “I were young once and I wanted things I could not get.”

There was another long pause. The boy’s mouth opened. Then he frowned, but not knowing he frowned.

The woman said, “Um-hum! You thought I was going to say but, didn’t you? You thought I was going to say, but I didn’t snatch people’s pocketbooks. Well, I wasn’t going to say that.” Pause. Silence. “I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son—neither tell God, if he didn’t already know. So you set down while I fix us something to eat. You might run that comb through your hair so you will look presentable.”

In another corner of the room behind a screen was a gas plate and an icebox. Mrs. Jones got up and went behind the screen. The woman did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse which she left behind her on the day-bed. But the boy took care to sit on the far side of the room where he thought she could easily see him out of the corner of her eye, if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman not to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted now.

“Do you need somebody to go to the store,” asked the boy, “maybe to get some milk or something?”

“Don’t believe I do,” said the woman, “unless you just want sweet milk yourself. I was going to make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here.”

“That will be fine,” said the boy.

She heated some lima beans and ham she had in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set the table. The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she told him about her job in a hotel beauty-shop that stayed open late, what the work was like, and how all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, red-heads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her ten-cent cake.

"Eat some more, son," she said.

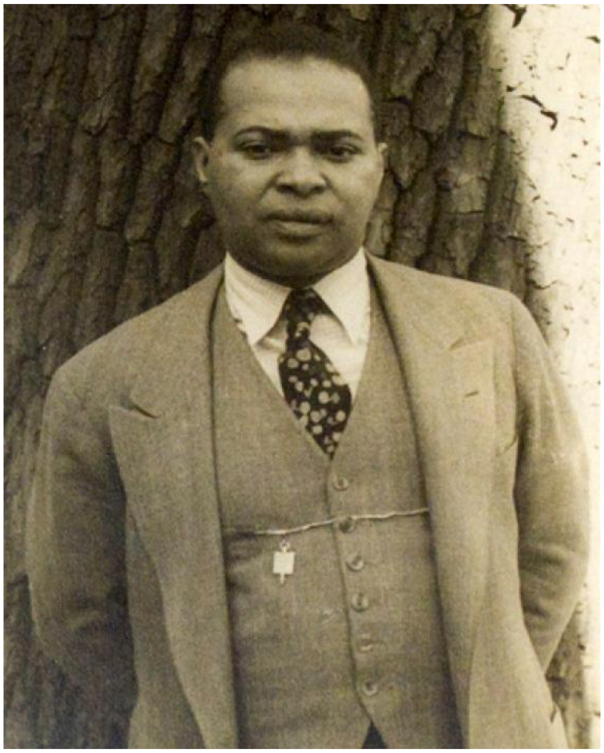
When they were finished eating she got up and said, "Now, here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor nobody else's—because shoes come by devilish like that will burn your feet. I got to get my rest now. But I wish you would behave yourself, son, from here on in."

She led him down the hall to the front door and opened it. "Good-night! Behave yourself, boy!" she said, looking out into the street.

The boy wanted to say something else other than "Thank you, m'am" to Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones, but he couldn't do so as he turned at the barren stoop and looked back at the large woman in the door. He barely managed to say "Thank you" before she shut the door. And he never saw her again.

Countee Cullen
(1903-1946)

Countee Cullen, in full Countee Porter Cullen, (born May 30, 1903, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.—died January 9, 1946, New York, New York), American poet, one of the finest of the Harlem Renaissance.



Reared by a woman who was probably his paternal grandmother, Countee at age 15 was unofficially adopted by the Reverend F.A. Cullen, minister of Salem M.E. Church, one of Harlem's largest congregations. He won a citywide poetry contest as a schoolboy and saw his winning stanzas widely reprinted. At New York University (B.A., 1925) he won the Witter Bynner Poetry Prize and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Major American literary magazines accepted his poems regularly, and his first collection of poems, *Color* (1925), was published to critical acclaim before he had finished college.

Cullen received an M.A. degree from Harvard University in 1926 and worked as an assistant editor for *Opportunity* magazine. In 1928, just before leaving the United States for France (where he would study on a Guggenheim Fellowship), Cullen married Yolande Du Bois, daughter of W.E.B. Du Bois (divorced 1930). After publication of *The Black Christ and Other Poems* (1929), Cullen's reputation as a poet waned. From 1934 until the end of his life he taught in New York City public schools. Most notable among his other works are *Copper Sun* (1927), *The Ballad of the Brown Girl* (1928), and *The Medea and Some Poems* (1935). His novel *One Way to Heaven* (1932) depicts life in Harlem.

Cullen's use of racial themes in his verse was striking at the time, and his material is always fresh and sensitively treated. He drew some criticism, however, because he was heavily influenced by the Romanticism of John Keats and preferred to use classical verse forms rather than rely on the rhythms and idioms of his black American heritage.

Thoughts In A Zoo

By: Countee Cullen

They in their cruel traps, and we in ours,
Survey each other's rage, and pass the hours
Commiserating each the other's woe,
To mitigate his own pain's fiery glow.
Man could but little proffer in exchange
Save that his cages have a larger range.
That lion with his lordly, untamed heart
Has in some man his human counterpart,
Some lofty soul in dreams and visions wrapped,
But in the stifling flesh securely trapped.
Gaunt eagle whose raw pinions stain the bars
That prison you, so men cry for the stars!
Some delve down like the mole far underground,
(Their nature is to burrow, not to bound),
Some, like the snake, with changeless slothful eye,
Stir not, but sleep and smoulder where they lie.
Who is most wretched, these caged ones, or we,
Caught in a vastness beyond our sight to see?

From the Dark Tower

By: Countee Cullen

We shall not always plant while others reap
The golden increment of bursting fruit,
Not always countenance, abject and mute,
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;
Not everlastingly while others sleep
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;
We were not made to eternally weep.

The night whose sable breast relieves the stark,
White stars is no less lovely being dark,
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall;
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,
And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.

Song In Spite Of Myself
By: Countee Cullen

Never love with all your heart,
It only ends in aching;
And bit by bit to the smallest part
That organ will be breaking.

Never love with all your mind,
It only ends in fretting;
In musing on sweet joys behind,
too poignant for forgetting.

Never love with all your soul,
for such there is no ending;
though a mind that frets may find control,
and a shattered heart find mending.

Give but a grain of the heart's rich seed,
Confine some undercover,
And when love goes, bid him God-speed,
and find another lover.

If You Should Go
By: Countee Cullen

Love, leave me like the light,
The gently passing day;
We would not know, but for the night,
When it has slipped away.

So many hopes have fled,
Have left me but the name
Of what they were. When love is dead,
Go thou, beloved, the same.

Go quietly; a dream
When done, should leave no trace
That it has lived, except a gleam
Across the dreamer’s face.

The Loss Of Love

By: Countee Cullen

All through an empty place I go,
And find her not in any room;
The candles and the lamps I light
Go down before a wind of gloom.
Thick-spraddled lies the dust about,
A fit, sad place to write her name
Or draw her face the way she looked
That legendary night she came.

The old house crumbles bit by bit;
Each day I hear the ominous thud
That says another rent is there
For winds to pierce and storms to flood.

My orchards groan and sag with fruit;
Where, Indian-wise, the bees go round;
I let it rot upon the bough;
I eat what falls upon the ground.

The heavy cows go laboring
In agony with clotted teats;
My hands are slack; my blood is cold;
I marvel that my heart still beats.

I have no will to weep or sing,
No least desire to pray or curse;
The loss of love is a terrible thing;
They lie who say that death is worse.

For Paul Laurence Dunbar

By: Countee Cullen

Born of the sorrowful of heart
Mirth was a crown upon his head;
Pride kept his twisted lips apart
In jest, to hide a heart that bled.

Saturday's Child

By: Countee Cullen

Some are teethed on a silver spoon,
With the stars strung for a rattle;
I cut my teeth as the black racoon—
For implements of battle.
Some are swaddled in silk and down,
And heralded by a star;
They swathed my limbs in a sackcloth gown
On a night that was black as tar.
For some, godfather and goddame
The opulent fairies be;
Dame Poverty gave me my name,
And Pain godfathered me.
For I was born on Saturday—
"Bad time for planting a seed,"
Was all my father had to say,
And, "One mouth more to feed."
Death cut the strings that gave me life,
And handed me to Sorrow,
The only kind of middle wife
My folks could beg or borrow.

Claude McKay
(1889–1948)

Claude McKay was a Jamaican poet best known for his novels and poems, including "If We Must Die," which contributed to the Harlem Renaissance.

Claude McKay moved to Harlem, New York, after publishing his first books of poetry, and established himself as a literary voice for social justice during the Harlem Renaissance. He is known for his novels, essays and poems, including "If We Must Die" and "Harlem Shadows." He died on May 22, 1948, in Chicago, Illinois.

Festus Claudius McKay was born in SunnyVille, Clarendon Parish, Jamaica, on September 15, 1889. His mother and father spoke proudly of their respective Malagasy and Ashanti heritage. McKay blended his African pride with his love of British poetry. He studied poetry and philosophy with Englishman Walter Jekyll, who encouraged the young man to begin producing poetry in his own Jamaican dialect.

A London publishing house produced McKay's first books of verse, Songs of Jamaica and Constab Ballads, in 1912. McKay used award money that he received from the Jamaican Institute of Arts and Sciences to move to the United States. He studied at the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) and Kansas State College for a total of two years. In 1914, he moved to New York City, settling in Harlem.

McKay published his next poems in 1917 under the pseudonym Eli Edwards. More poems appeared in Pearson's Magazine and the radical magazine Liberator. The Liberator poems included "If We Must Die," which threatened retaliation for racial prejudice and abuse; this quickly became McKay's best-known piece of work. McKay then left the United States for two years of European travel. In 1920, he published a new collection of poems,
Spring in New Hampshire, containing "Harlem Shadows."

McKay returned to the United States in 1921 and involved himself in various social and political causes. He worked with the Universal Negro Improvement Association and continued to explore Communism—even traveling to the Soviet Union to attend the Communist Party's Fourth

Congress. After spending some time in the United States, McKay again left the country, spending what would prove to be 11 extremely productive years in Europe and North Africa; he wrote three novels—Home to Harlem, Banjo and Banana Bottom—and a short story collection during this period. Home to Harlem was the most popular of the three, though all were well received by critics.

Returning to Harlem, McKay began work on an autobiography entitled A Long Way from Home, which focuses on his experiences as an oppressed minority and agitates for a broad movement against colonialism and segregation. The book has been criticized for its less-thancandid treatment of some of McKay's more controversial interests and beliefs. His consistent denial of having joined the Communist Party, despite multiple trips to the Soviet Union, is a point of particular contention.

Later Life and Death

McKay went through several changes toward the end of his life. He embraced Catholicism, retreating from Communism entirely, and officially became an American citizen in 1940. His experiences working with Catholic relief organizations in New York inspired a new essay collection, Harlem: Negro Metropolis, which offers observations and analysis of the African American community in Harlem at the time. McKay died of a heart attack in Chicago, Illinois, on May 22, 1948.

Videos

Biography of Claude McKay: https://youtu.be/vWPwryU6feo
Recitation of “If We Must Die” https://youtu.be/L_xpilVoWuo
Recitation of “America” https://youtu.be/2vzAjXFx_0U

If We Must Die
Claude McKay

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed In
vain; then even the monsters we defy Shall be
constrained to honor us though dead!
Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave, And
for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave? Like
men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

The White House
Claude McKay

Your door is shut against my tightened face,
And I am sharp as steel with discontent;
But I possess the courage and the grace To
bear my anger proudly and unbent.
The pavement slabs burn loose beneath my feet,
And passion rends my vitals as I pass, A chafing
savage, down the decent street; Where boldly
shines your shuttered door of glass.
Oh, I must search for wisdom every hour,
Deep in my wrathful bosom sore and raw,
And find in it the superhuman power To
hold me to the letter of your law! Oh, I
must keep my heart inviolate Against the
potent poison of your hate.

Harlem Shadows
Claude McKay

I hear the halting footsteps of a lass
In Negro Harlem when the night lets fall
Its veil. I see the shapes of girls who pass
To bend and barter at desire's call.
Ah, little dark girls who in slippered feet
Go prowling through the night from street to street!

Through the long night until the silver break
Of day the little gray feet know no rest;
Through the lone night until the last snow-flake
Has dropped from heaven upon the earth's white breast, The
dusky, half-clad girls of tired feet
Are trudging, thinly shod, from street to street.

Ah, stern harsh world, that in the wretched way
Of poverty, dishonor and disgrace, Has
pushed the timid little feet of clay, The
sacred brown feet of my fallen race! Ah,
heart of me, the weary, weary feet In
Harlem wandering from street to street.

America
Claude McKay

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess I
love this cultured hell that tests my youth!
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
Giving me strength erect against her hate.
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,
I stand within her walls with not a shred Of
terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

The Harlem Dancer
Claude McKay

Applauding youths laughed with young prostitutes
And watched her perfect, half-clothed body sway;
Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes
Blown by black players upon a picnic day.
She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,
The light gauze hanging loose about her form; To
me she seemed a proudly-swaying palm Grown
lovelier for passing through a storm.
Upon her swarthy neck black shiny curls
Luxuriant fell; and tossing coins in praise,
The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls,
Devoured her shape with eager, passionate gaze;
But looking at her falsely-smiling face, I knew
her self was not in that strange place.

Poetry
Claude McKay

Sometimes I tremble like a storm-swept flower,
And seek to hide my tortured soul from thee,
Bowing my head in deep humility Before the
silent thunder of thy power.
Sometimes I flee before thy blazing light,
As from the specter of pursuing death;
Intimidated lest thy mighty breath,
Windways, will sweep me into utter night. For
oh, I fear they will be swallowed up—
The loves which are to me of vital worth, My
passion and my pleasure in the earth— And
lost forever in thy magic cup!
I fear, I fear my truly human heart
Will perish on the altar-stone of art!

Georgia Douglas Johnson
(1880-1966)

A member of the Harlem Renaissance, Georgia Douglas Johnson wrote plays, a syndicated newspaper column, and four collections of poetry: *The Heart of a Woman* (1918), *Bronze* (1922), *An Autumn Love Cycle* (1928), and *Share My World* (1962).

Johnson was born in Atlanta, Georgia, to parents of African American, Native American, and English descent.

Georgia Douglas Johnson (September 10, 1880–May 14, 1966) was among the women who were Harlem Renaissance figures. She was a poet, playwright, editor, music teacher, school principal, and pioneer in the Black theater movement and wrote more than 200 poems, 40 plays, 30 songs, and edited 100 books. She challenged both racial and gender barriers to succeed in these areas. Though Johnson never found great success as a playwright or poet during her lifetime, she was influential to generations of noted Black writers and playwrights who came after. Her home was an important meeting place where leading Black thinkers would come to discuss their lives, ideas, and projects, and, indeed, she came to be known as the "Lady Poet of the New Negro Renaissance."

Johnson was born Georgia Douglas Camp in Atlanta, Georgia, to Laura Douglas and George Camp. She graduated from the Normal School of Atlanta University in 1896. Camp taught in Marietta, Georgia, and Atlanta. She left teaching in 1902 to attend Oberlin Conservatory of Music, intending to become a composer. She later returned to teaching in Atlanta and became an assistant principal.

She married Henry Lincoln Johnson, an attorney and government worker in Atlanta who was active in the Republican Party on September 28, 1903, and took his last name. Thereafter, she was known as Georgia Davis Johnson.

The Salon

Moving to Washington, D.C, in 1909 with her husband and two children, Johnson's home at 1461 S Street NW soon became known as Halfway House due to her willingness to provide shelter for those in need. The home also eventually became an important gathering place for Black writers and artists, who discussed their ideas and debuted their new works there.

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, Black artists, poets, and playwrights, including Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Angelina Grimke, W.E.B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Mary Burrill, and Anne Spencer, met for weekly cultural gatherings, which became known as "The S Street Salon" and "Saturday Nighters."

Treva B. Lindsey, a Black feminist cultural critic, historian, and commentator, stated in her 2017 book, "Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington, D.C.," that Johnson's home, and in particular the weekly gatherings, represented a much "understudied" community of Black writers, playwrights, and poets, especially Black women, in what was initially called "The New Negro Movement" and eventually, the Harlem Renaissance:

"With a particular emphasis on the writing of African American women, the S Street Salon evolved into a viable space for African American women writers to workshop their poems, plays, short stories, and novels. Many of the New Negro era literary works produced by African American women participants of the S Street Salon tackled politically significant and contentious issues such as racial and sexual violence and women's reproductive rights....The S Street Salon was arguably one of the most significant intellectual, political, and cultural communities of the New Negro era."1

Johnson published her first poems in 1916 in the NAACP's Crisis magazine. Two years later, she released her first book of poetry, "The Heart of a Woman and Other Poems," which focused on the experience of a woman. Jessie Redmon Fauset, a Black editor, poet, essayist, novelist, and educator, helped Johnson select the poems for the book. That first collection of poems was important, explains the New Georgia Encyclopedia:

The poems established Johnson "as one of the notable African American woman poets of her time. Built on themes of loneliness, isolation, and the confining aspects of the roles of women, the title poem substitutes the metaphor of 'a lone bird, soft winging, so restlessly on' for 'the heart of a woman,' which ultimately 'falls back with the night / And enters some alien cage in its plight, / And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars.'"2

In her 1922 collection "Bronze," Johnson responded to early criticism by focusing more on racial issues. Although some critics have praised the richly penned, emotional content, others saw a need for something more than the picture of helplessness presented in such poems as "Smothered Fires," "When I Am Dead," and "Foredoom."

Johnson's husband reluctantly supported her writing career until his death in 1925. In that year, President Calvin Coolidge appointed Johnson to a position as commissioner of conciliation in the Department of Labor, recognizing her late husband's support of the Republican Party. But she needed her writing to help support herself and her children.

Johnson continued to write, publishing her best-known work, "An Autumn Love Cycle," in 1925. Still, she struggled financially after her husband died. She wrote a syndicated weekly newspaper column from 1926 to 1932.

After she lost the Department of Labor job in 1934, during the depths of the Great Depression, Johnson worked as a teacher, librarian, and file clerk in the 1930s and 1940s. She found it difficult to get her works published; most of her anti-lynching writings of the 1920s and 1930s never made it to print at the time, and some have been lost.

During World War II, Johnson published poems and read some on radio shows. She continued writing plays into the era of the civil rights movement, though by that time other Black women writers were more likely to be noticed and published, including Lorraine Hansberry, whose "Raisin in the Sun" play opened on Broadway at the Barrymore Theatre on March 11, 1959, to critical acclaim.

In 1965, Atlanta University awarded Johnson an honorary doctorate. She saw to her sons' education: Henry Johnson Jr. graduated from Bowdoin College and then Howard University law school, while Peter Johnson attended Dartmouth College and Howard University medical school.

Death

Johnson died on May 15, 1966, in Washington, D.C., shortly after finishing her "Catalogue of Writings," which chronicled the 28 plays she wrote. Much of her unpublished work was lost, including many papers that were mistakenly discarded after her funeral.

Videos

"The Heart of a Woman" https://youtu.be/3mgYRrHMKYI
"Black Woman" https://youtu.be/sq9nGm47K84
"I Want To Die While You Love Me" https://youtu.be/Bpk2rR6yWYk

The Heart of a Woman

By: Georgia Douglas Johnson

The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn,
As a lone bird, soft winging, so restlessly on,
Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam In
the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.

The heart of a woman falls back with the night,
And enters some alien cage in its plight, And tries to
forget it has dreamed of the stars While it breaks,
breaks, breaks on the sheltering bars.

My Little Dreams

By: Georgia Douglas Johnson

I'm folding up my little dreams
  Within my heart tonight,
And praying I may soon forget
The torture of their sight.

For time's deft fingers scroll my brow
  With fell relentless art— I'm
folding up my little dreams
Tonight, within my heart.

Your World
By: Georgia Douglas Johnson

Your world is as big as you make it.
I know, for I used to abide In the
narrowest nest in a corner, My
wings pressing close to my side.

But I sighted the distant horizon
Where the skyline encircled the sea And
I throbbed with a burning desire To
travel this immensity.

I battered the cordons around me
And cradled my wings on the breeze,
Then soared to the uttermost reaches With
rapture, with power, with ease!

Black Woman
By: Georgia Douglas Johnson

Don't knock at my door, little child,
    I cannot let you in,
You know not what a world this is
Of cruelty and sin.
Wait in the still eternity
    Until I come to you,
The world is cruel, cruel, child,
I cannot let you in!

Don't knock at my heart, little one,
    I cannot bear the pain
Of turning deaf-ear to your call
Time and time again!
You do not know the monster men
    Inhabiting the earth, Be still,
be still, my precious child, I
must not give you birth!

Want to Die While You Love Me
By: Georgia Douglas Johnson

I want to die while you love me,
While yet you hold me fair,
While laughter lies upon my lips And
lights are in my hair.

I want to die while you love me,
And bear to that still bed,
Your kisses turbulent, unspent To
warm me when I'm dead.

I want to die while you love me
Oh, who would care to live
Till love has nothing more to ask And
nothing more to give?

I want to die while you love me
And never, never see
The glory of this perfect day Grow
dim or cease to be!

Old Black Men
By: Georgia Douglas Johnson

They have dreamed as young men dream
    Of glory, love and power;
They have hoped as youth will hope
Of life's sun-minted hour.

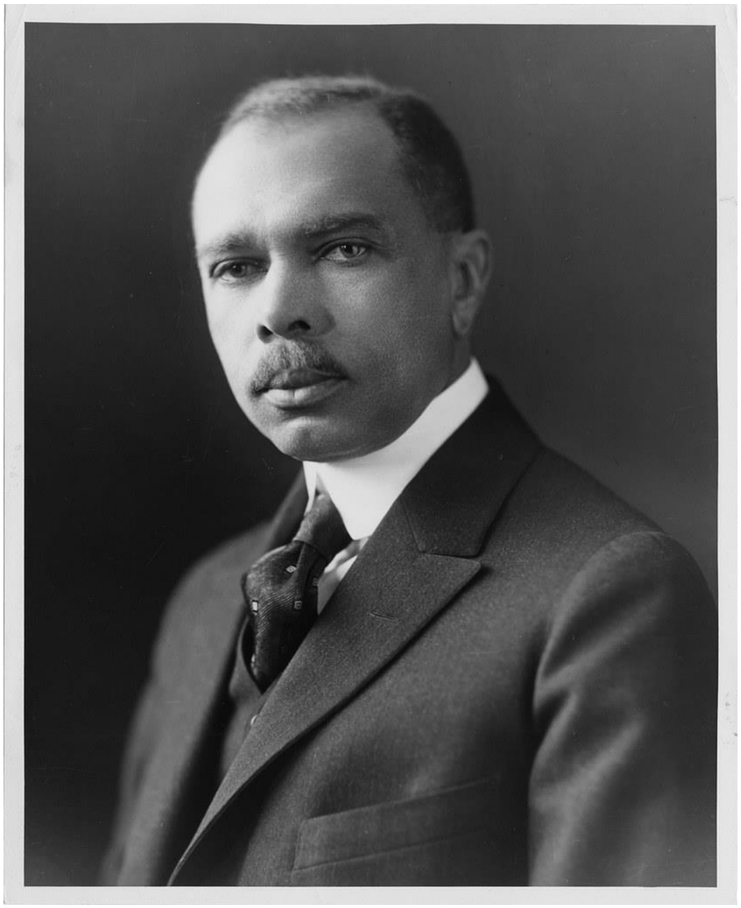
They have seen as other saw
    Their bubbles burst in air,
And they have learned to live it down
As though they did not care.

James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)

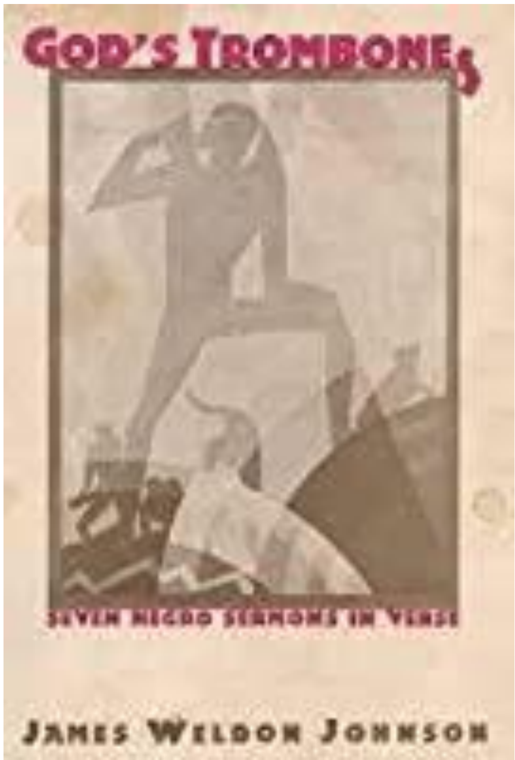
James Weldon Johnson, (born June 17, 1871, Jacksonville, Fla., U.S.— died June 26, 1938, Wiscasset, Maine), poet, diplomat, and anthologist of black culture.

Trained in music and other subjects by his mother, a schoolteacher, Johnson graduated from Atlanta University with A.B. (1894) and M.A. (1904) degrees and later studied at Columbia University. For several years he was principal of the black high school in Jacksonville, Fla. He read law at the same time, was admitted to the Florida bar in 1897, and began practicing there. During this period, he and his brother, John Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954), a composer, began writing songs, including "Lift Every Voice and Sing," based on James's 1900 poem of the same name, which became something of a national anthem to many African Americans. In 1901 the two went to New York, where they wrote some 200 songs for the Broadway musical stage. In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him U.S. consul to Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, and in 1909 he became consul in Corinto, Nicaragua, where he served until 1914. He later taught at Fisk University. Meanwhile, he began writing a novel, The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man (published anonymously, 1912), which attracted little attention until it was reissued under his own name in 1927. From 1916 Johnson was a leader in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Fifty Years and Other Poems (1917) was followed by his pioneering anthology *Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922) and books of *American Negro Spirituals* (1925, 1926), collaborations with his brother. His best-known work, *God's Trombones* (1927), a



group of black dialect sermons in verse, includes “The Creation” and “Go Down, Death.” Johnson’s introductions to his anthologies contain some of the most perceptive assessments ever made of black contributions to American culture. *Along This Way* (1933) is an autobiography.



This dust jacket was created by the African American artist Aaron Douglas for James Weldon Johnson's God's Trombones (1927), a collection of black dialect sermons.

Videos

Biographies of James Weldon Johnson:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hB2NYABMnqY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGaTy3jF4uc

“The Creation” https://youtu.be/nsL-dlhAxRQ
“Lift Every Voice And Sing”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONgOH_tq7-Q
Recitation of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by Phylicia Rashad
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQTb7axyHTM
Recitation of “Go Down, Death” https://youtu.be/ucJojcDqfpE?t=67

Lift Every Voice and Sing
By: James Weldon Johnson

A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida, arranged to celebrate Lincoln's birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercises. I wrote the words and he wrote the music. Our New York publisher, Edward B. Marks, made mimeographed copies for us, and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of five hundred colored school children. Shortly afterwards my brother and I moved away from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within twenty years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country. Today the song, popularly known as the Negro National Hymn, is quite generally used.
The lines of this song repay me in an elation, almost of exquisite anguish, whenever I hear them sung by Negro children.

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught
us, Sing a song full of the hope that the present has
brought us. Facing the rising sun of our new day
begun, Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget
Thee; Shadowed beneath Thy hand, May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land.

A Poet to His Baby Son By James Weldon Johnson

Tiny bit of humanity,
Blessed with your mother’s face, And
cursed with your father’s mind.

I say cursed with your father’s mind,
Because you can lie so long and so quietly on your back,
Playing with the dimpled big toe of your left foot,
And looking away,
Through the ceiling of the room, and beyond.
Can it be that already you are thinking of being a poet?

Why don’t you kick and howl,
And make the neighbors talk about
“That damned baby next door,”
And make up your mind forthwith
To grow up and be a banker
Or a politician or some other sort of go-getter
Or—?—whatever you decide upon, Rid
yourself of these incipient thoughts
About being a poet.

For poets no longer are makers of songs,
Chanters of the gold and purple harvest,
Sayers of the glories of earth and sky,
Of the sweet pain of love
And the keen joy of living;
No longer dreamers of the essential dreams, And
interpreters of the eternal truth, Through the
eternal beauty.
Poets these days are unfortunate fellows.
Baffled in trying to say old things in a new way
Or new things in an old language,
They talk abracadabra
In an unknown tongue,
Each one fashioning for himself
A wordy world of shadow problems,
And as a self-imagined Atlas,
Struggling under it with puny legs and arms, Groaning out
incoherent complaints at his load.

My son, this is no time nor place for a poet;
Grow up and join the big, busy crowd
That scrambles for what it thinks it wants Out
of this old world which is—as it is— And,
probably, always will be.

Take the advice of a father who knows:
You cannot begin too young Not to be
a poet.

Sence You Went Away

By: James Weldon Johnson

Seems lak to me de stars don't shine so bright,
Seems lak to me de sun done loss his light,
Seems lak to me der's nothin' goin' right,
Sence you went away.

Seems lak to me de sky ain't half so blue,
Seems lak to me dat eve'ything wants you,
Seems lak to me I don't know what to do,
Sence you went away.

Seems lak to me dat eve'ything is wrong,
Seems lak to me de day's jes twice ez long,
Seems lak to me de bird's forgot his song,
Sence you went away.

Seems lak to me I jes can't he’p but sigh,
Seems lak to me ma th’oat keeps gittin’ dry,
Seems lak to me a tear stays in ma eye,
Sence you went away.

The Gift to Sing

Sometimes the mist overhangs my path,
And blackening clouds about me cling;
But, oh, I have a magic way To
turn the gloom to cheerful day—
I softly sing.

And if the way grows darker still,
Shadowed by Sorrow's somber wing,
With glad defiance in my throat,
I pierce the darkness with a
note, And sing, and sing.

I brood not over the broken past,
Nor dread whatever time may bring;
No nights are dark, no days are long,
While in my heart there swells a song,
And I can sing.

The Creation By: James Weldon Johnson

And God stepped out on
space, And he looked
around and said: I'm
lonely— I'll make me a
world.

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the
other, And God said: That's good!

Then God reached out and took the light in his hands,
And God rolled the light around in his hands
Until he made the sun;
And he set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered it up in a shining ball And
flung it against the darkness, Spangling
the night with the moon and stars.
Then down between
The darkness and the
light He hurled the
world; And God said:
That's good!

Then God himself stepped down—
And the sun was on his right hand,
And the moon was on his left;
The stars were clustered about his
head, And the earth was under his feet.
And God walked, and where he
trod His footsteps hollowed the
valleys out And bulged the
mountains up.

Then he stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And he spat out the seven seas— He batted
his eyes, and the lightnings flashed— He
clapped his hands, and the thunders
rolled— And the waters above the earth
came down, The cooling waters came
down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms,
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared, And
curled itself around his shoulder.

Then God raised his arm and he waved his
hand Over the sea and over the land, And
he said: Bring forth! Bring forth!
And quicker than God could drop his hand,
Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the
woods, And split the air with their
wings.
And God said: That's good!

Then God walked
around, And God
looked around On all
that he had made.
He looked at his sun,
And he looked at his moon,
And he looked at his little stars;
He looked on his world
With all its living things,
And God said: I'm lonely
still.

Then God sat down—
On the side of a hill where he could think;
By a deep, wide river he sat down;
With his head in his hands, God
thought and thought, Till he
thought: I'll make me a man!

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand;
This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in is his own image;

Then into it he blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul. Amen. Amen.

Go Down, Death (A Funeral Sermon)

By: James Weldon Johnson

Weep not, weep not,
She is not dead;
She's resting in the bosom of Jesus.
Heart-broken husband--weep no more;
Grief-stricken son--weep no more; Left-
lonesome daughter --weep no more; She
only just gone home.

Day before yesterday morning,
God was looking down from his great, high heaven,
Looking down on all his children,
And his eye fell on Sister Caroline,
Tossing on her bed of pain.
And God's big heart was touched with pity,
With the everlasting pity.

And God sat back on his throne,
And he commanded that tall, bright angel standing at his right hand:
Call me Death!
And that tall, bright angel cried in a voice
That broke like a clap of thunder:
Call Death!--Call Death!
And the echo sounded down the streets of heaven
Till it reached away back to that shadowy place,
Where Death waits with his pale, white horses.

And Death heard the summons,
And he leaped on his fastest horse,
Pale as a sheet in the moonlight.
Up the golden street Death galloped,
And the hooves of his horses struck fire from the
gold, But they didn't make no sound. Up Death
rode to the Great White Throne, And waited for
God's command.

And God said: Go down, Death, go down,
Go down to Savannah, Georgia,
Down in Yamacraw,
And find Sister Caroline.
She's borne the burden and heat of the day,
She's labored long in my vineyard,
And she's tired--

She's weary--
Go down, Death, and bring her to me.

And Death didn't say a word,
But he loosed the reins on his pale, white horse,
And he clamped the spurs to his bloodless sides,
And out and down he rode,
Through heaven's pearly
gates, Past suns and moons
and stars; on Death rode,
Leaving the lightning's flash behind;
Straight down he came.

While we were watching round her bed,
She turned her eyes and looked away,
She saw what we couldn't see; She saw
Old Death. She saw Old Death Coming
like a falling star. But Death didn't
frighten Sister Caroline; He looked to
her like a welcome friend. And she
whispered to us: I'm going home, And
she smiled and closed her eyes.

And Death took her up like a
baby, And she lay in his icy
arms, But she didn't feel no
chill.
And death began to ride again--
Up beyond the evening star,
Into the glittering light of glory,
On to the Great White Throne.
And there he laid Sister Caroline
On the loving breast of Jesus.

And Jesus took his own hand and wiped away her tears,
And he smoothed the furrows from her face,
And the angels sang a little song,
And Jesus rocked her in his arms,
And kept a-saying: Take your rest,
Take your rest.

Weep not--weep not,
She is not dead;
She's resting in the bosom of Jesus.

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)

Zora Neale Hurston became the most successful and most significant black woman writer of the first half of the 20th century. Over a career that spanned more than 30 years, she published four novels, two books of folklore, an autobiography, numerous short stories, and several essays, articles and plays.

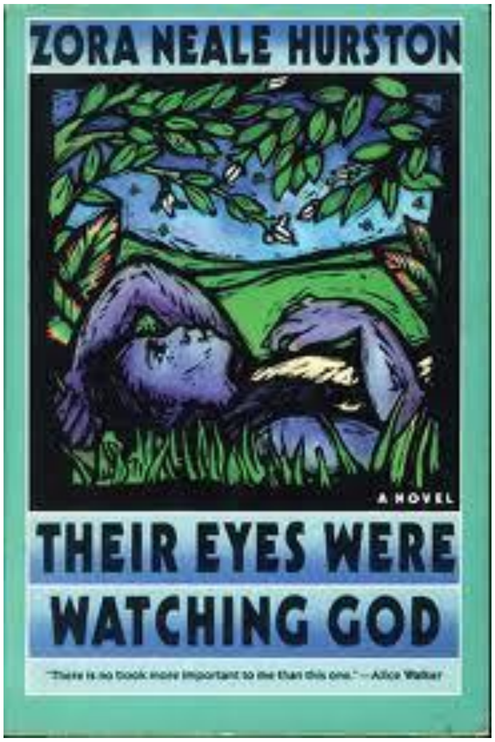
Born on Jan. 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Alabama, Zora Neale Hurston moved with her family to Eatonville, Florida, when she was still a toddler. Her writings reveal no recollection of her Alabama beginnings. For Hurston, Eatonville was always home.

In Eatonville, Zora was never indoctrinated in inferiority, and she could see the evidence of black achievement all around her. She could look to town hall and see black men, including her father, John Hurston, formulating the laws that governed Eatonville. She could look to the Sunday Schools of the town's two churches and see black women, including her mother, Lucy Potts Hurston, directing the Christian curricula. She could look to the porch of the village store and see black men and women passing worlds through their mouths in the form of colorful, engaging stories.

Growing up in this culturally affirming setting in an eight-room house on five acres of land, Zora had a relatively happy childhood, despite frequent clashes with her preacher-father, who sometimes sought to "squinch" her rambunctious spirit, she recalled. Her mother, on the other hand, urged young Zora and her seven siblings to "jump at de sun." Hurston explained, "We might not land on the sun, but at least we would get off the ground."

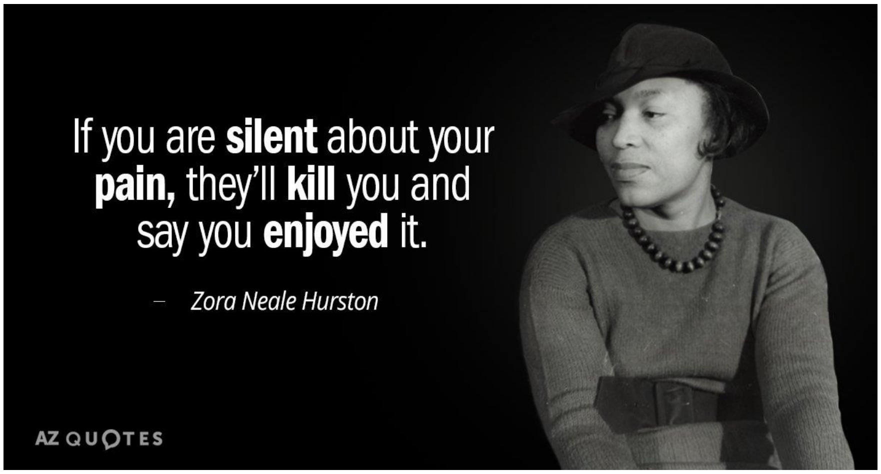
Hurston's idyllic childhood came to an abrupt end, though, when her mother died in 1904. Zora was only 13 years old. "That hour began my wanderings," she later wrote. "Not so much in geography, but in time. Then not so much in time as in spirit."

After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora's father remarried quickly–to a young woman whom the hotheaded Zora almost killed in a fistfight–and he seemed to have little time or money for his children. "Bare and bony of comfort and love," Zora worked a series of menial jobs over the ensuing years, struggled to finish her schooling, and eventually joined a Gilbert & Sullivan traveling troupe as a maid to the lead singer. In 1917, she turned up in Baltimore; by then, she was 26 years old and still hadn't finished high school. Needing to present herself as a teenager to qualify for free public schooling, she lopped 10 years off her life–giving her age as 16 and the year of her birth as 1901. Once gone, those years were never restored: From that moment forward, Hurston would always present herself as at least 10 years younger than she actually was. Apparently, she had the looks to pull it off. Photographs reveal that she was a handsome, big-boned woman with playful yet penetrating eyes, high cheekbones, and a full, graceful mouth that was never without expression.


ZORA NEALE HURSTON
A NOVEL
THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD
"There is no book more important to me than this one." —Alice Walker

Zora also had a fiery intellect, an infectious sense of humor, and "the gift," as one friend put it, "of walking into hearts." Zora used these talents–and dozens more–to elbow her way into the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, befriending such luminaries as poet Langston Hughes and popular singer/actress Ethel Waters. Though Hurston rarely drank, fellow writer Sterling Brown recalled, "When Zora was there, she was the party." Another friend remembered Hurston's apartment–furnished by donations she solicited from friends–as a spirited "open house" for artists. All this socializing didn't keep Hurston from her work, though. She would sometimes write in her bedroom while the party went on in the living room.

By 1935, Hurston–who'd graduated from Barnard College in 1928–had published several short stories and articles, as well as a novel (*Jonah's Gourd Vine*) and a well-received collection of black Southern folklore (Mules and Men). But the late 1930s and early '40s marked the real zenith of her career. She published her masterwork, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, in 1937; *Tell My Horse*, her study of Caribbean Voodoo practices, in 1938; and another masterful novel, *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, in 1939. When her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, was published in 1942, Hurston finally received the well-earned acclaim that had long eluded her. That year, she was profiled in *Who's Who in America*, Current Biography and Twentieth Century Authors. She went on to publish another novel, *Seraph* on the Suwanee, in 1948.


If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.
– Zora Neale Hurston
AZ QUOTES

Still, Hurston never received the financial rewards she deserved. (The largest royalty she ever earned from any of her books was $943.75.) Therefore, when she died on Jan. 28, 1960–at age 69, after suffering a stroke–her neighbors in Fort Pierce, Florida, had to take up a collection for her February 7 funeral. The collection didn't yield enough to pay for a headstone, however, so Hurston was buried in a grave that remained unmarked until 1973.

That summer, a young writer named Alice Walker traveled to Fort Pierce to place a marker on the grave of the author who had so inspired her own work.

Videos

Biography of Zora Neale Hurston: https://youtu.be/7k1ozpwiQIM
"How It Feels To Be Colored Me" https://youtu.be/-Cgjj6Pp7Co
Zora Neale Hurston sings and performs the Crow Dance https://youtu.be/3g9WyHsMj4Q

How It Feels to Be Colored Me

I AM COLORED but I offer nothing in the way of extenuating circumstances except the fact that I am the only Negro in the United States whose grandfather on the mother's side was *not* an Indian chief.

I remember the very day that I became colored. Up to my thirteenth year I lived in the little Negro town of Eatonville, Florida. It is exclusively a colored town. The only white people I knew passed through the town going to or coming from Orlando. The native whites rode dusty horses, the Northern tourists chugged down the sandy village road in automobiles. The town knew the Southerners and never stopped cane chewing when they passed. But the Northerners were something else again. They were peered at cautiously from behind curtains by the timid. The more venturesome would come out on the porch to watch them go past and got just as much pleasure out of the tourists as the tourists got out of the village.

The front porch might seem a daring place for the rest of the town, but it was a gallery seat for me. My favorite place was atop the gate-post. Proscenium box for a born first-nighter. Not only did I enjoy the show, but I didn't mind the actors knowing that I liked it. I usually spoke to them in passing. I'd wave at them and when they returned my salute, I would say something like this: "Howdy-do-well-I-thank-you-where-yougoin'?" Usually automobile or the horse paused at this, and after a queer exchange of compliments, I would probably "go a piece of the way" with them, as we say in farthest Florida. If one of my family happened to come to the front in time to see me, of course negotiations would be rudely broken off. But even so, it is clear that I was the first "welcome-to-our-state" Floridian, and I hope the Miami Chamber of Commerce will please take notice.

During this period, white people differed from colored to me only in that they rode through town and never lived there. They liked to hear me “speak pieces" and sing and wanted to see me dance the parse-me-la, and gave me generously of their small silver for doing these things, which seemed strange to me for I wanted to do them so much that I needed bribing to stop, only they didn't know it. The colored people gave no dimes. They deplored any joyful tendencies in me, but I was their Zora nevertheless. I belonged to them, to the nearby hotels, to the county-everybody's Zora.

But changes came in the family when I was thirteen, and I was sent to school in Jacksonville. I left Eatonville, the town of the oleanders, a Zora. When I disembarked from the river-boat at Jacksonville, she was no more. It seemed that I had suffered a sea change. I was not Zora of Orange County anymore, I was now a little colored girl. I found it out in certain ways. In my heart as well as in the mirror, I became a fast brown-warranted not to rub nor run.

BUT I AM NOT tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all but about it. Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world--I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.

Someone is always at my elbow reminding me that I am the granddaughter of slaves. It fails to register depression with me. Slavery is sixty years in the past. The operation was successful and the patient is doing well, thank you. The terrible struggle that made me an American out of a potential slave said "On the line!" The Reconstruction said "Get set!" and the generation before said "Go! " I am off to a flying start and I must not halt in the stretch to look behind and weep. Slavery is the price I paid for civilization, and the choice was not with me. It is a bully adventure and worth all that I have paid through my ancestors for it. No one on earth ever had a greater chance for glory. The world to be won and nothing to be lost. It is thrilling to think-to know that for any act of mine, I shall get twice as much praise or twice as much blame. It is quite exciting to hold the center of the national stage, with the spectators not knowing whether to laugh or to weep.

The position of my white neighbor is much more difficult. No brown specter pulls up a chair beside me when I sit down to eat. No dark ghost thrusts its leg against mine in bed. The game of keeping what one has is never so exciting as the game of getting.

I do not always feel colored. Even now - I often achieve the unconscious Zora of Eatonville before the Hegira. I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background.

For instance at Barnard. "Beside the waters of the Hudson" I feel my race. Among the thousand white persons, I am a dark rock surged upon, and overswept, but through it all, I remain myself. When covered by the waters, I am; and the ebb but reveals me again.

Sometimes it is the other way around. A white person is set down in our midst, but the contrast is just as sharp for me. For instance, when I sit in the drafty basement that is The New World Cabaret with a white person, my color comes. We enter chatting about any little nothing that we have in common and are seated by the jazz waiters. In the abrupt way that jazz orchestras have, this one plunges into a number. It loses no time in circumlocutions, but gets right down to business. It constricts the thorax and splits the heart with its tempo and narcotic harmonies. This orchestra grows rambunctious, rears on its hind legs and attacks the tonal veil with primitive fury, rending it, clawing it until it breaks through to the jungle beyond. I follow those heathen--follow them exultingly. I dance wildly inside myself; I yell within, I whoop; I shake my assegai above my head, I hurl it true to the mark *yeeeeooww!* I am in the jungle and living in the jungle way. My face is painted red and yellow and my body is painted blue, My pulse is throbbing like a war drum. I want to slaughter something-give pain, give death to what, I do not know. But the piece ends. The men of the orchestra wipe their lips and rest their fingers. I creep back slowly to the veneer we call civilization with the last tone and find the white friend sitting motionless in his seat, smoking calmly.

"Good music they have here," he remarks, drumming the table with his fingertips.

Music. The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him. He has only heard what I felt. He is far away and I see him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us. He is so pale with his whiteness then and I am so colored.

At certain times, I have no race, I am *me.* When I set my hat at a certain angle and saunter down Seventh Avenue, Harlem City, feeling as snooty as the lions in front of the Forty-Second Street Library, for instance. So far as my feelings are concerned, Peggy Hopkins Joyce on the Boule Mich with her gorgeous raiment, stately carriage, knees knocking together in a most aristocratic manner, has nothing on me. The cosmic Zora emerges. I belong to no race nor time. I am the eternal feminine with its string of beads.

I have no separate feeling about being an American citizen and colored. I am merely a fragment of the Great Soul that surges within the boundaries. My country, right or wrong.

Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me.

But in the main, I feel like a brown bag of miscellany propped against a wall. Against a wall in company with other bags, white, red and yellow. Pour out the contents, and there is discovered a jumble of small, things priceless and worthless. A first-water diamond, an empty spool bits of broken glass, lengths of string, a key to a door long since crumbled away, a rusty knife-blade, old shoes saved for a road that never was and never will be, a nail bent under the weight of things too heavy for any nail, a dried flower or two still a little fragrant. In your hand is the brown bag. On the ground before you is the jumble it held--so much like the jumble in the bags, could they be emptied that all might be dumped in a single heap and the bags refilled without altering the content of any greatly. A bit of colored glass more or less would not matter. Perhaps that is how the Great Stuffer of Bags filled them in the first place-who knows?

Harlem Renaissance Musicians

Louis Armstrong (1901-1971)

Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on August 4, 1901. He was raised by his mother Mayann in a neighborhood, so dangerous it was called "The Battlefield." He only had a fifth-grade education, dropping out of school early to go to work. An early job working for the Jewish Karnofsky family allowed Armstrong to make enough money to purchase his first cornet.

On New Year's Eve 1912, he was arrested and sent to the Colored Waif's Home for Boys. There, under the tutelage of Peter Davis, he learned how to properly play the cornet, eventually becoming the leader of the Waif's Home Brass Band. Released from the Waif's Home in 1914, Armstrong set his sights on becoming a professional musician. Mentored by the city's top cornetist, Joe "King" Oliver, Armstrong soon became one of the most in-demand cornetists in town, eventually working steadily on Mississippi riverboats.

In 1922, King Oliver sent for Armstrong to join his band in Chicago. Armstrong and Oliver became the talk of the town with their intricate two-cornet breaks and started making records together in 1923. By that point, Armstrong began dating the pianist in the band, Lillian Hardin. In 1924, Armstrong married Hardin, who urged Armstrong to leave Oliver and try to make it on his own. A year in New York with Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra proved unsatisfying so Armstrong returned to Chicago in 1925 and began making records under his own name for the first time.

The records by Louis Armstrong and His Five–and later, Hot Seven–are the most influential in jazz. Armstrong's improvised solos transformed jazz from an ensemble-based music into a soloist's art, while his expressive vocals incorporated innovative bursts of scat singing and an underlying swing feel. By the end of the decade, the popularity of the Hot Fives and Sevens was enough to send Armstrong back to New York, where he appeared in the popular Broadway revue, "Hot Chocolates." He soon began touring and never really stopped until his death in 1971.

The 1930s also found Armstrong achieving great popularity on radio, in films, and with his recordings. He performed in Europe for the first time in 1932 and returned in 1933, staying for over a year because of a damaged lip. Back in America in 1935, Armstrong hired Joe Glaser as his manager and began fronting a big band, recording pop songs for Decca, and appearing regularly in movies. He began touring the country in the 1940s.

In 1947, the waning popularity of the big bands forced Armstrong to begin fronting a small group, Louis Armstrong and His All Stars. Personnel changed over the years but this remained Armstrong's main performing vehicle for the rest of his career. He had a string of pop hits beginning in 1949 and started making regular overseas tours, where his popularity was so great, he was dubbed "Ambassador Satch."

In America, Armstrong had been a great Civil Rights pioneer for his race, breaking down numerous barriers as a young man. In the 1950s, he was sometimes criticized for his onstage persona and called an "Uncle Tom" but he silenced critics by speaking out against the government's handling of the "Little Rock Nine" high school integration crisis in 1957.

Armstrong continued touring the world and making records with songs like "Blueberry Hill" (1949), "Mack the Knife" (1955) and "Hello, Dolly! (1964)," the latter knocking the Beatles off the top of the pop charts at the height of Beatlemania.

The many years of constant touring eventually wore down Armstrong, who had his first heart attack in 1959 and returned to intensive care at Beth Israel Hospital for heart and kidney trouble in 1968. Doctors advised him not to play but Armstrong continued to practice every day in his Corona, Queens home, where he had lived with his fourth wife, Lucille, since 1943. He returned to performing in 1970 but it was too much, too soon and he passed away in his sleep on July 6, 1971, a few months after his final engagement at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City.

Videos of Louis Armstrong

Biography of Louis Armstrong: https://youtu.be/sIILBeUrYLk

"Hello Dolly" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7N2wssse14

"When The Saints Go Marching In" https://youtu.be/wyLjbMBpGDA

"Blueberry Hill" https://youtu.be/ts1qTynO1zg

"What A Wonderful World" https://youtu.be/VqhCQZaH4Vs

Bessie Smith (1894-1937)

Bessie Smith was known as the "Empress of the Blues" for the majesty and power with which she belted out tunes. Her unforgettably amazing voice established her as the classical blues singer.

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she was coached by blues singer Ma Rainey, Smith was touring the South by the time she was in her teens.

In 1923 she headed for the recording studios of New York City. Her first release, "Down-Hearted Blues," sold more than 750,000 copies in one month. In coming years she would record with all the top jazz musicians, including Fletcher Henderson, James P. Johnson, and Louis Armstrong.

For the most part, only African-American audiences were privileged to catch her earliest live performances. Smith sang at speakeasies, rent parties, and "buffet flats" (private apartments that blacks rented for the night in the era of hotel segregation). She also appeared at the Lafayette Theatre, the Lincoln Theatre, and a summer tent show dubbed the "Harlem Frolics."

Standing over six feet tall and weighing more than 200 pounds, Smith had an imposing stage presence. Her powerful physique was matched by the strength and sweep of her voice—and personal manner. Smith's fierce business acumen, toughness, and heavy drinking set her in stark contrast to the petite, demure white singers of the day.

Bessie Smith's evocative voice and style ultimately captivated black and white audiences alike. Her electrifying stage presence served her well in film and theater, too: Smith starred in the movie St. Louis Blues in 1929 and substituted for Billie Holiday in the musical show Stars Over Broadway in 1935.

Songs by Bessie Smith

Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do
https://youtu.be/1VKEKkTQU-k

Give Me A Pigfoot and A Bottle of Beer
https://youtu.be/SlyyJAx2-Bk

Down Hearted Blues
https://youtu.be/go6TiLIeVZA

Billie Holiday (1915–1959)

Who Was Billie Holiday?

Billie Holiday is considered one of the best jazz vocalists of all time. Holiday was born Eleanora Fagan on April 7, 1915, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holiday spent much of her childhood in Baltimore, Maryland. Her mother, Sadie, was only a teenager when she had her. Her father is widely believed to be Clarence Holiday, who eventually became a successful jazz musician, playing with the likes of Fletcher Henderson.

Holiday had a somewhat unstable home life.
At age nine, because of her poor attendance in school, she was sent to the House of Good Shepherd, a facility for troubled African American girls, in January 1925. She was returned to her mother's care a year later after she had been sexually assaulted.

In her difficult early life, Holiday found solace in music, singing along to the records of Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong. She followed her mother, who had moved to New York City in the late 1920s, and worked in a house of prostitution in Harlem for a time.

Around 1930, Holiday began singing in local clubs and renamed herself "Billie" after the film star Billie Dove.

Billie Holiday Songs

At the age of 18, Holiday was discovered by producer John Hammond while she was performing in a Harlem jazz club. Hammond was instrumental in getting Holiday recording work with an up-and-coming clarinetist and bandleader Benny Goodman.

Known for her distinctive phrasing and expressive, sometimes melancholy voice, Holiday went on to record with jazz pianist Teddy Wilson and others in 1935.

She made several singles, including "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" and "Miss Brown to You." That same year, Holiday appeared with Duke Ellington in the film Symphony in Black.

Lady Day

Around this time, Holiday met and befriended saxophonist Lester Young, who was part of Count Basie's orchestra on and off for years. He even lived with Holiday and her mother Sadie for a while.

Young gave Holiday the nickname "Lady Day" in 1937—the same year she joined Basie's band. In return, she called him "Prez," which was her way of saying that she thought it was the greatest.

Holiday toured with the Count Basie Orchestra in 1937. The following year, she worked with Artie Shaw and his orchestra. Holiday broke new ground with Shaw, becoming one of the first female African American vocalists to work with a white orchestra.

Promoters, however, objected to Holiday—for her race and for her unique vocal style—and she ended up leaving the orchestra out of frustration.

"Strange Fruit"

Striking out on her own, Holiday performed at New York's Café Society. She developed some of her trademark stage persona there—wearing gardenias in her hair and singing with her head tilted back.

During this engagement, Holiday also debuted two of her most famous songs, "God Bless the Child" and "Strange Fruit." Columbia, her record company at the time, was not interested in "Strange Fruit," which was a powerful story about the lynching of African Americans in the South.

Holiday recorded the song with the Commodore label instead. "Strange Fruit" is considered to be one of her signature ballads, and the controversy that surrounded it—some radio stations banned the record—helped make it a hit.

Over the years, Holiday sang many songs of stormy relationships, including "T'ain't Nobody's Business If I Do" and "My Man." These songs reflected her personal romances, which were often destructive and abusive.

Holiday married James Monroe in 1941. Already known to drink, Holiday picked up her new husband's habit of smoking opium. The marriage didn't last—they later divorced—but Holiday's problems with substance abuse continued.

Personal Problems

That same year, Holiday had a hit with "God Bless the Child." She later signed with Decca Records in 1944 and scored an R&B hit the next year with "Lover Man."

Her boyfriend at the time was trumpeter Joe Guy, and with him she started using heroin. After the death of her mother in October 1945, Holiday began drinking more heavily and escalated her drug use to ease her grief.

Despite her personal problems, Holiday remained a major star in the jazz world—and even in popular music as well. She appeared with her idol Louis Armstrong in the 1947 film New Orleans, albeit playing the role of a maid.

Unfortunately, Holiday's drug use caused her a great professional setback that same year. She was arrested and convicted for narcotics possession in 1947. Sentenced to one year and a day of jail time, Holiday went to a federal rehabilitation facility in Alderston, West Virginia.

Released the following year, Holiday faced new challenges. Because of her conviction, she was unable to get the necessary license to play in cabarets and clubs. Holiday, however, could still perform at concert halls and had a sold-out show at the Carnegie Hall not long after her release.

With some help from John Levy, a New York club owner, Holiday was later to get to play in New York's Club Ebony. Levy became her boyfriend and manager by the end of the 1940s, joining the ranks of the men who took advantage of Holiday.

Later Years

While her hard living was taking a toll on her voice, Holiday continued to tour and record in the 1950s. She began recording for Norman Granz, the owner of several small jazz labels, in 1952. Two years later, Holiday had a hugely successful tour of Europe.

Holiday also caught the public's attention by sharing her life story with the world in 1956. Her autobiography, Lady Sings the Blues (1956), was written in collaboration by William Dufty.

Around this time, Holiday became involved with Louis McKay. The two were arrested for narcotics in 1956, and they married in Mexico the following year. Like many other men in her life, McKay used Holiday's name and money to advance himself.

Death and Legacy

Holiday gave her final performance in New York City on May 25, 1959. Not long after this event, Holiday was admitted to the hospital for heart and liver problems.

She was so addicted to heroin that she was even arrested for possession while in the hospital. On July 17, 1959, Holiday died from alcohol- and drug-related complications.

More than 3,000 people turned out to say good-bye to Lady Day at her funeral held in St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church on July 21, 1959. A who's who of the jazz world attended the solemn occasion, including Goodman, Gene Krupa, Tony Scott, Buddy Rogers and John Hammond.

Considered one of the best jazz vocalists of all time, Holiday has been an influence on many other performers who have followed in her footsteps.

Videos of Billie Holiday Bio
https://youtu.be/ABl7jGVZEY8
https://youtu.be/Nfl4fFKrLtw

Strange Fruit
https://youtu.be/-DGY9HvChXk

Strange Fruit Lyrics:
Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swingin' in the Southern breeze
Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant South
The bulgin' eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolias sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burnin' flesh

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather
For the wind to suck
For the sun to rot
For the tree to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop

Don’t Explain
https://youtu.be/0MWRheQtvmA

God Bless the Child with Count Basie
https://youtu.be/9m7WAQE1SOs

Duke Ellington (1899-1974)

Duke Ellington, byname of Edward Kennedy Ellington, (born April 29, 1899, Washington, D.C., U.S.—died May 24, 1974, New York, N.Y.), remains one of the most influential figures in jazz, if not in all American music and is widely considered as one of the twentieth century's best known African American personalities and was the greatest jazz composer and bandleader of his time. One of the originators of big-band jazz, Ellington led his band for more than half a century, composed thousands of scores, and created one of the most distinctive ensemble sounds in all of Western music.

Ellington grew up in a secure middle-class family in Washington, D.C. His family encouraged his interests in the fine arts, and he began studying piano at age seven. He became engrossed in studying art during his high-school years, and he was awarded, but did not accept, a scholarship to the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York. Inspired by ragtime performers, he began to perform professionally at age 17.

Ellington first played in New York City in 1923. Later that year he moved there and, in Broadway nightclubs, led a sextet that grew in time into a 10-piece ensemble. Extended residencies at the Cotton Club in Harlem (1927–32, 1937–38) stimulated Ellington to enlarge his band to 14 musicians and to expand his compositional scope.) With these exceptional musicians, who remained with him throughout the 1930s, Ellington made hundreds of recordings, appeared in films and on radio, and toured Europe in 1933 and 1939.

The expertise of this ensemble allowed Ellington to break away from the conventions of band-section scoring. Instead, he used new harmonies to blend his musicians' individual sounds and emphasized congruent sections and a supple ensemble that featured Carney's full bass-clef sound. He illuminated subtle moods with ingenious combinations of instruments; among the most famous examples is "Mood Indigo" in his 1930 setting for muted trumpet, unmuted trombone, and low-register clarinet. Tenor saxophonist Ben Webster and bassist Jimmy Blanton, both major jazz artists, were with this classic Ellington band. By then, too, Billy Strayhorn, composer of what would become the band’s theme song, “Take the ‘A’ Train,” had become Ellington’s composing-arranging partner.

As both a composer and a band leader, Ellington's reputation has increased since his death, with thematic repackagings of his signature music often becoming best-sellers. Posthumous recognition of his work include a special award citation from the Pulitzer Prize Board.

Consider

- President Lyndon Johnson presented Duke Ellington with the President’s Gold Medal in 1966.
- President Richard M Nixon presented Duke Ellington with the Medal of Freedom in 1969.
- Duke Ellington received 13 Grammy Awards.
- Duke Ellington received the Pulitzer Prize
- Was awarded the French Legion of Honor in 1973.
- Has a United States Commemorative stamp with his image on it issued in 1986.

Duke Ellington influenced millions of people both around the world and at home. He gave American music its own sound for the first time. In his fifty year career, he played over 20,000 performances in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East as well as Asia.

Duke Ellington is best remembered for the over 3000 songs that he composed during his lifetime. His best known titles include; "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing", "Sophisticated Lady", "Mood Indigo", “Solitude", "In a Mellotone", and "Satin Doll". The most amazing part about Ellington was the most creative while he was on the road. It was during this time when he wrote his most famous piece, "Mood Indigo" which brought him worldwide fame.

When asked what inspired him to write, Ellington replied, "My men and my race are the inspiration of my work. I try to catch the character and mood and feeling of my people".

Duke Ellington was partial to giving brief verbal accounts of the moods his songs captured. Reading those accounts is like looking deep into the

background of an old photo of New York and noticing the lost and almost unaccountable details that gave the city its character during Ellington's heyday, which began in 1927 when his band made the Cotton Club its home. "The memory of things gone," Ellington once said, "is important to a jazz musician," and the stories he sometimes told about his songs are the record of those things gone. But what is gone returns, its pulse kicking, when Ellington's music plays, and never mind what past it is, for the music itself still carries us forward today.

Duke Ellington was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1966. He was later awarded several other prizes, the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969, and the Legion of Honor by France in 1973, the highest civilian honors in each country. He died of lung cancer and pneumonia on May 24, 1974, a month after his 75th birthday, and is buried in the Bronx, in New York City. At his funeral attended by over 12,000 people at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Ella Fitzgerald summed up the occasion, "It's a very sad day...A genius has passed."

Videos of Duke Ellington

"Mood Indigo" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x02lJ023tJ4
"Take The A Train" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6mFGy4g_n8
"It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing" with Ella Fitzgerald
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myRc-30F1d0

Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993)

Dizzy Gillespie, byname of John Birks Gillespie, (born October 21, 1917, Cheraw, South Carolina, U.S.—died January 6, 1993, Englewood, New Jersey), American jazz trumpeter, composer, and bandleader who was one of the seminal figures of the bebop movement.

Gillespie's father was a bricklayer and amateur bandleader who introduced his son to the basics of several instruments. After his father died in 1927, Gillespie taught himself the trumpet and trombone; for two years he attended the Laurinburg Institute in North Carolina, where he played in the band and took music classes. His first professional job was in Frankie Fairfax's band in Philadelphia; his early style showed the strong influences of his idol, trumpeter Roy Eldridge. Gillespie's penchant for clowning and capriciousness earned him the nickname Dizzy. In 1937 he was hired for Eldridge's former position in the Teddy Hill Orchestra and made his recording debut on Hill's version of "King Porter Stomp."

DAVID
JACKSON

In the late 1930s and early '40s, Gillespie played in a number of bands, including those led by Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald, Earl Hines, Duke Ellington, and Billy Eckstine. He also took part in many late-night jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse, a New York City nightclub, and was among the club's regulars who pioneered the bebop sound and style (others included Charlie Parker, Charlie Christian, Thelonious Monk, and Max Roach). In 1944 the first bebop recording session included Gillespie's "Woody 'n' You" and featured Gillespie and Coleman Hawkins. Ultimately, Charlie Parker and Gillespie were regarded as cofounders of the bebop movement; the two worked together in several small groups in the 1940s and early '50s. Although Parker was easily irritated by Gillespie's onstage antics, their musical relationship seemed to benefit from their personal friction and their competitive solos were inventive, even inspired.

Gillespie formed his own orchestra in the late 1940s, and it was considered to be one of the finest large jazz ensembles. Noted for complex arrangements and instrumental virtuosity, its repertoire was divided between the bop approach—from such arrangers as Tadd Dameron, John Lewis, George Russell, and Gillespie himself—and Afro-Cuban jazz (or, as Gillespie called it, "Cubop")—in such numbers as "Manteca," "Cubano Be," and "Cubano Bop," featuring conga drummer Chano Pozo. Gillespie formed other bands sporadically throughout the remainder of his career, but he played mostly in small groups from the 1950s onward.

To many, Gillespie ranks as the greatest jazz trumpeter of all time, with the possible exception of Louis Armstrong. He took the saxophone-influenced lines of Roy Eldridge and executed them faster, with greater ease and harmonic daring, playing his jagged melodies with abandon, reaching into the highest registers of the trumpet range, and improvising into precarious situations from which he seemed always to extricate himself. Gillespie helped popularize the interval of the augmented eleventh (flat fifth) as a characteristic sound in modern jazz, and he used certain stock phrases in his improvisations that became clichés when two generations of jazz musicians incorporated them into their own solos. His late 1940s look—beret, hornrim glasses, and goatee—became the unofficial “bebop uniform” and a precursor to the beatnik styles of the 1950s. Other personal trademarks included his bent-bell trumpet and his enormous puffy cheeks that ballooned when playing. Gillespie was also a noted composer whose songbook is a list of bebop’s greatest hits; “Salt Peanuts,” “Woody ’n’ You,” “Con Alma,” “Groovin’ High,” “Blue ’n’ Boogie,” and “A Night in Tunisia” all became jazz standards.

Although his most innovative period was over by the end of the 1950s, Gillespie continued to perform at the highest level. During the 1970s he made several big band, small-group, and duet recordings (with such players as Oscar Peterson and Count Basie) that rank among his best work. As an active musical ambassador, Gillespie led several overseas tours sponsored by the U.S. State Department and traveled the world extensively, sharing his knowledge with younger players. During his last few years, he was the leader of the United Nations Orchestra, which featured such Gillespie protégés as Paquito D’Rivera and Arturo Sandoval. Gillespie’s memoirs, To Be, or Not…to Bop, were published in 1979.

Videos

Dizzie Gillespie Documentary:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0uuLcMaPzI

“Salt Peanuts” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6N8eL-cuEU

“Umbrella Man” with Louis Armstrong:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO1uMjz3n3w

“A Night in Tunisia” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkemox0461U

“Mmm Hmm” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEvtmb8WBj8

Cab Calloway (1907-1994)

Cabell "Cab" Calloway III (December 25, 1907 – November 18, 1994) was an American jazz singer, dancer, bandleader and actor. A premier black entertainer of the Harlem Renaissance, Cabell ("Cab") Calloway's impressive singing ability and showmanship won him steady gigs at the famous Cotton Club in Harlem, New York City. His niche of mixing jazz and him mastery of scat-jive vocals won him acclaim during a career that spanned over 65 years.[1]

His signature style was to improvise nonsense (but incredibly inventive) lyrics on the spot, often incorporating snippets of Harlem street slang in his monologues and songs.

Calloway led one of the United States' most popular big bands from the early 1930s to the late 1940s. His band included trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie, Jonah Jones, and Adolphus "Doc" Cheatham, saxophonists Ben Webster and Leon "Chu" Berry, guitarist Danny Barker, bassist Milt Hinton, and drummer Cozy Cole.

Some of Calloway's most popular songs referenced the nitty-gritty of Harlem nightlife and its more fervent practitioners, such as his 1931 smash hit, "Minnie the Moocher." In this innovative song, Calloway used call-and-response technique to bat the phrase "Hi-de-ho" back and forth between stage and audience.

Calloway didn't find acclaim in nightclubs alone. His talent also sparkled in theaters and on the silver screen. In 1929, when Calloway landed a role in Connie's Hot Chocolates—a musical revue created by the team of Fats Waller and Andy Razaf—he found himself sharing the stage with a young trumpeter named Louis Armstrong. In 1937, he appeared in the revue Manhattan Merry-Go Round with the beloved dance group Whitey's Lindy Hoppers.

Audiences nationwide would soon witness Calloway's talents when he toured in George Gershwin's acclaimed musical Porgy and Bess, playing a fictional character named "Sportin' Life," who is thought to have been based on Cab Calloway himself.

Calloway reached the *Billboard* charts in five consecutive decades (1930s–1970s).[3] Calloway also made several stage, film, and television appearances until his death in 1994 at the age of 86. He had roles in *Stormy Weather* (1943), *Porgy and Bess* (1953), *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965), and *Hello Dolly!* (1967). His career saw renewed interest in 1980 when he appeared in *The Blues Brothers.*

Calloway was the first African-American musician to sell a million records from a single song and to have a nationally syndicated radio show.[4] In 1993, Calloway received the National Medal of Arts from the United States Congress.[5] He posthumously received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. His song "Minnie the Moocher" was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999 and added to the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry in 2019.[6] He is also inducted into the Big Band and Jazz Hall of Fame and the International Jazz Hall of Fame.

Videos of Cab Calloway

Minnie The Moocher

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mq4UT4VnbE

Jumpin' Jive

https://youtu.be/IoMbeDhG9fU

Paul Robeson (1898-1976)

Paul Robeson, in full **Paul Bustill Robeson**, (born April 9, 1898, Princeton, N.J., U.S.—died Jan. 23, 1976, Philadelphia, Pa.), celebrated American singer, actor, and black activist.

The son of a former slave turned preacher, Robeson attended Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., where he was an All-America football player. Upon graduating from Rutgers at the head of his class, he rejected a career as a professional athlete and instead entered Columbia University. Robeson went on to earn a degree from Columbia University's Law School, where he met and married Eslanda Goode in 1921. He worked briefly as a lawyer in 1923, although abandoned his firm due to severe racism from coworkers. Because of the lack of opportunity for blacks in the legal profession, he drifted to the stage. With Eslanda by his side as his manager, Robeson dove headfirst into the fast-paced life of an actor, making a London debut in 1922. He joined the Provincetown Players, a New York theatre group that included playwright Eugene O'Neill, and appeared in O'Neill's play *All God's Chillun Got Wings* in 1924. His subsequent appearance in the title role of O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* caused a sensation in New York City (1924) and London (1925). He also starred in the film version of the play (1933). In addition to his other talents, Robeson had a superb bass-baritone singing voice. In 1925 he gave his first vocal recital of African American spirituals in Greenwich Village, New York City, and he became world famous as Joe in the musical play *Show Boat* with his version of "Ol' Man River." His characterization of the title role in *Othello* in London (1930) won high praise, as did the Broadway production (1943), which set an all-time record run for a Shakespearean play on

Broadway. Robeson appeared in a number of films, including *Sanders of the River* (1935), *Show Boat* (1936), *Song of Freedom* (1936), and *The Proud Valley* (1940).

Extremely involved with politics and foreign policy, Paul Robeson was a great role model for many young children. He regularly spoke out against racism and discrimination, and wanted equality for all, regardless of race, gender, or religion. After being called a communist, he was barred from renewing his passport by the State Department in 1950. Because of his support for racial equality, he was banned from many concerts, recording labels, and film studios. He published an autobiography of his life, *Here I Stand*, in 1958. In 1958, the Supreme Court overturned the affidavit ruling. Robeson then left the United States to live in Europe and travel in countries of the Soviet bloc, but he returned to the United States in 1963 because of ill health.During the same year, his passport was reinstated, so he once again traveled the world giving lectures. He suffered from a great depression during these tours, primarily from the immense criticism that he had received. Robeson's wife, Eslanda, died in 1965, he moved in with his sister. On January 23rd, 1976, Robeson suffered a stroke and died at the age of 77.

Paul Robeson in *Show Boat*.
Culver Pictures

Interesting Facts

- Robeson's father was an escaped slave.
- Robeson was chosen All-American in football.
- During his short career as a lawyer, Robeson faced extreme racism. Once, a white secretary refused to take dictation from him, therefore creating racial issues within the firm.
- Paul Robeson performed in 300 productions of the Broadway hit, Othello.
- Although Robeson never won an Academy Award, he was recognized many times for his superb acting abilities.

Very Short Video Clip of Paul Robeson History: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcOoreBHa8U
Paul Robeson sings "Ol' Man River" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eh9WayN7R-s
Paul Robeson's Bio: https://afrovoices.com/paul-robeson-biography/
Paul Robeson does Shakespeare, a monologue from Othello: https://youtu.be/J9tg4Q-cg44

Credit: URL: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Robeson

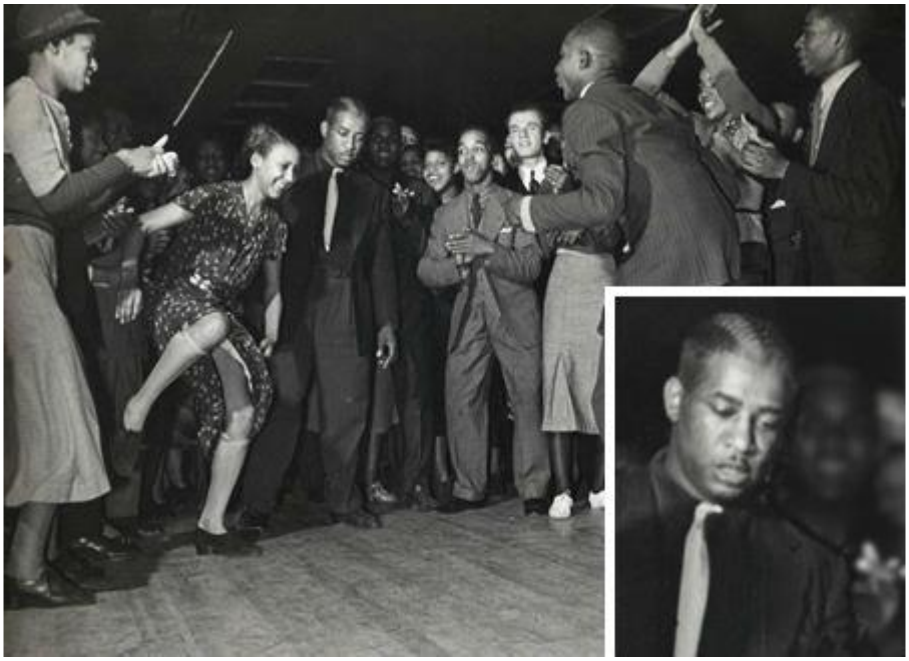
Harlem Renaissance Dance

Herbert “Whitey” White

A former bouncer (and ex-prize fighter) at the Savoy Ballroom exported the Lindy Hop from Harlem to dance halls around the world. After years of watching talented amateur dancers pack the Savoy night after night, Herbert "Whitey" White set out to recruit the best of them for a professional dance troupe.

The Lindy Hop—the reigning dance of the day—ignited cutthroat competition among its practitioners.

At the Savoy Ballroom dance hall, for example, you wouldn't dare venture out onto the small patch of floor known as "Cat's Corner" unless you believed your skills to be among the best. Creativity and personal expression ruled this spot where elite dancers congregated.



Skimming the cream from this crop, White formed Whitey's Lindy Hoppers in 1935. He began booking his dancers at public and private venues all over town. Parties thrown by rich white socialites were prized gigs.

Whitey's troupe hit the big time when several members won the Lindy Hop division at the Harvest Moon Ball, New York City's premier dance competition. The troupe translated this success into an international tour that took the dancers to Broadway and the Cotton Club in New York and the Moulin Rouge in Paris. This in turn led to film appearances, notably the Marx Brothers' A Day at the Races. The troupe's appearance in the movie Helzapoppin' introduced the Lindy Hop to the masses—and touched off a global dance sensation.

Lindy Hop in Harlem: The Role of Social Dancing

During the 1920s, Harlem was filled with African Americans who migrated from the rural south to the industrial north in search of a better life. Instead, they found that housing and jobs were scarce. Landlords charged high rents to people who earned low wages, and overcrowding was rampant. Racial discrimination was a fact of life. Social dance played an important role in Harlem life. For some, dance was a reprieve from the harsh economic realities and the drudgery of earning a living doing monotonous tasks. People often held "rent parties" filled with music and dance, where guests were charged an entry fee that was used to pay the monthly rent.

The Savoy Ballroom defined the essence of dance in Harlem. It was a place where race was irrelevant, "...whether you were black, green, yellow, or what. If you walked in the Savoy, the only thing we wanted to know is can you dance?" It was a place of elegant beauty, with a burnished maple dance floor, colored spotlights, and crystal cut chandeliers. It was a place where round tables were packed with people, root-de-toot root beer, and ginger ale sold for a nickel. The crescendo of the best big-band jazz in the world drove dancers to their feet as the sounds of Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Fess Williams, King Oliver, and Chick Webb filled the air. Saturday night dance contests at the Savoy featured such Lindy Hop dance greats as Herbert "Whitey" White, Leroy "Stretch" Jones, Frank "Musclehead" Manning, and "Shorty" George Snowden.

The Lindy Hop, an authentic Afro-Euro-American Swing dance that drew on African and European dance traditions, emerged as one of many popular dances during this time. It was influenced by the Charleston, jazz and tap steps, ballet, and complex movements from the Viennese Waltz. Dance partners separated improvised, adding their own tempos, signature moves, and individualized acrobatics to the six- and eight-count step sequences. As the Lindy Hop grew in popularity, it evolved into many forms, such as West

Coast Swing, Rock'n'Roll, Boogie Woogie, the Jitterbug, Jive, Bop, Shag, Balboa, and the Imperial. Lindy Hop dancers created new steps as the music inspired them, much as jazz musicians improvise. Some of the Lindy Hop steps are synchronized with the musical phrases, and other steps cross the rhythm of the music in the same fashion as polyrhythms found in jazz.

The Lindy Hop, and social dance in general, formed bridges between different art forms. Dancers practiced the Lindy Hop alongside bands booked at the Savoy Ballroom. Jazz great Duke Ellington wrote a song as a tribute to Florence Mills, a dancer, jazz singer and actress. Louis Armstrong composed a piece for dancer Shorty George, "King of the Savoy," who is often given credit for giving the Lindy Hop its name. Countee Cullen wrote about the joy of dance in his poem "She of the Dancing Feet Sings." Painter William H. Johnson's work, *Street Life*, was inspired by the stylish people he saw at the Savoy Ballroom. Jazz musicians and dancers are pictured in Palmer Hayden's painting, *Jeunesse*. Margaret Brassler Kane's sculpture, *Harlem Dancers*, depicts embracing dance partners. And so on.

Painter Aaron Douglas describes the Harlem Renaissance, highlighting the relationship between art and culture. "...Our problem is to conceive, develop, establish an art era. Not white art painting black...let's bare our arms and plunge them deep through laughter, through pain, through sorrow, through hope, through disappointment, into the very depths of the souls of our people and drag forth material crude, rough, neglected. Then let's sing it, dance it, write it, paint it." Social dance both reflected and was a reflection of the culture of the Harlem Renaissance. It was a way for people to celebrate, to escape, and to express their identity.

More Information about the History of the Lindy Hop

Website:
http://www.savoystyle.com/whiteys_lindy_hoppers.html

Video of the Lindy Hop
https://youtu.be/-g9070-MPcQ

Bill "Bojangles" Robinson (1878-1949)

Born in Richmond, Virginia, Bill Robinson began dancing in local saloons at the age of six. He became a popular fixture on the vaudeville circuit just two years after that. While still a child, he was given the nickname "Bojangles," although even Robinson himself was unsure of the origin of that moniker.

In 1905, Robinson forged a partnership—lifelong, it turned out—with agent Marty Forkins, who got the dancer a golden opportunity: the chance to develop a solo act.

(African-American dancers of the time appeared exclusively in pairs.) Robinson made the most of it, touring the United States and Europe until the late 1920s.

Robinson took up residence in Harlem in 1928. That was the year he landed a role in the all-black musical revue Blackbirds of 1928, which was staged by a white producer for white audiences. Robinson's popularity soared.

Tap-dancing high on his toes and moving his upper body with understated grace, Robinson displayed a lightness and finesse never seen before. He shunned the frantic style of his predecessors for a more elegant, precise form of tap.

Robinson's talent gave him entrée to two worlds—white entertainment and black—yet he was never completely accepted in either one. White audiences adored the films in which he co-starred with Shirley Temple or Will Rogers, but his commercially successful roles were modeled on racist stereotypes, such as that of the genial black servant. Though artistically satisfying, his few forays into black films—notably Harlem Is Heaven—didn't make him much money.

Robinson began performing at Harlem's Cotton Club in the mid-1930s. In 1939, he joined the Broadway cast of an African-American musical called Hot Mikado. The white establishment, meanwhile, cemented his celebrity status by naming him honorary mayor of Harlem—and mascot of the New

York Giants baseball team. Many prominent African Americans, however, found these distinctions to be demeaning and paternalistic.

Despite the racial tension that dogged his career, Robinson revolutionized his art, conquered both stage and screen, and triumphed as a Harlem legend.

Video of Bill “Bojangles” Robinson (Biography – Video of his dancing in beginning of the video).

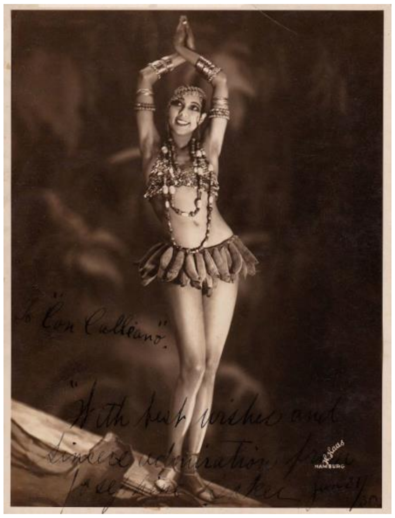
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWtImcRU_ug

Josephine Baker
(1906-1975)

World renowned performer, World War II spy, and activist are few of the titles used to describe Josephine Baker. One of the most successful African American performers in French history, Baker's career illustrates the ways entertainers can use their platforms to change the world.

On June 3, 1906, Freda Josephine McDonald was born in St. Louis, Missouri. Her parents, both entertainers, performed throughout the segregated Midwest often bringing her on stage during their shows. Unfortunately, their careers never took off, forcing the young Baker to look for odd jobs to survive. If she was unable to find work she would often dance on the streets, collecting money from onlookers. Eventually, her routine caught the attention of an African American theatre troupe. At the age of 15, Baker ran off and began to perform with the group. She also married during this time, taking her husband's last name and dropping her first name, becoming Josephine Baker.

Baker flourished as a dancer in several Vaudeville shows, which was a popular theatre genre in the 20th century. She eventually moved to New York City and participated in the celebration of black life and art now known as the Harlem Renaissance. A few years later her success took her to Paris. Baker became one of the most sought-after performers due to her distinct dancing style and unique costumes. Although her audiences were mostly white, Baker's performances followed African themes and style. In her famed show *Danse Sauvage* she danced across stage in a banana skirt. Baker was multitalented, known for her dancing and singing she even played in several successful major motion pictures released in Europe.



When Adolf Hitler and the German army invaded France during World War II, Baker joined the fight against the Nazi regime. She aided French military officials by passing on secrets she heard while performing in front of the enemy. She transported the confidential information by writing with invisible ink on music sheets. After many years of performing in Paris, Baker returned to the United States.

Her return home forced Baker to confront segregation and discrimination that she had not experienced since she was a child in St. Louis. She often refused to perform to segregated audiences, which usually forced club owners to integrate for her shows. Her opposition against segregation and discrimination was recognized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1963, she was one of the few women allowed to speak at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Her speech detailed her life as a black woman in the United States and abroad:

> *"You know, friends, that I do not lie to you when I tell you I have walked into the palaces of kings and queens and into the houses of presidents. And much more. But I could not walk into a hotel in America and get a cup of coffee, and that made me mad."*

Baker continued to fight racial injustices into the 1970s. Her personal life was a testament to her political agenda. Throughout her career, she adopted 13 children from various countries. She called her family "the rainbow tribe" and took her children on the road in an effort to show that racial and cultural harmony could exist. Baker remained on stage late into her life and in 1975 she performed for the last time. The show was sold out and she received a standing ovation. Baker passed away on April 12, 1975.

Credit: https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/josephine-baker
Banana Dance: https://youtu.be/L9jNCm6CVV0
Josephine Baker's Speech from The March on Washington: https://youtu.be/9pv0QhEyS5c

Florence Mills (18951927)

Florence Mills was an immensely popular performer and Harlem personality, evidenced by the more than 150,000 people who crowded the streets around Mother Zion Church in Harlem in 1927 to mourn her untimely death from appendicitis.

Mills' groundbreaking work in theater broke down many barriers for African-American performers. Her whirlwind career began at the age of four, when she appeared on stage in a musical that was written, produced, and performed by African Americans.

After touring for several years on the vaudeville and cabaret circuits, Mills got her big break in 1921 as the lead in Shuffle Along. Written, directed, produced and performed by African Americans, the musical was wildly successful and caused a sensation. Mills held audiences spellbound with her eccentric dancing and her unique, high-pitched voice.

Following her success in Shuffle Along, Mills was offered a part in the Ziegfeld Follies. Instead, she chose to perform in a competing all-black revue, Dixie to Broadway. International success did not arrive until Florence Mills starred in the tremendously popular show Blackbirds, which reached black and white audiences alike. The musical showcased her signature tune, "I'm a Little Blackbird Looking for a Bluebird." Delivered in her trademark soprano that came close to resembling birdsong, the tune earned Mills the nickname "Blackbird." Some scholars of the Harlem Renaissance have suggested that the deceptively simple melody masked a song of protest.

Videos

Video Bio of Florence Mills https://youtu.be/PcjpX8yynJw

Student Video Bio of Florence Mills
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtRkcfcTaxI&list=RDQMLjrvoQZ3WD4&index=2

Video of Florence Mills (in black) dancing with Bessie Dudley to Duke Ellington Band

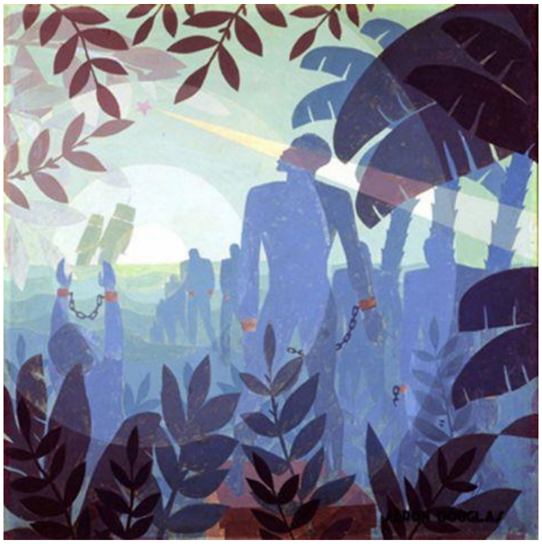
https://youtu.be/wZabpO4-nJ0

Harlem Renaissance Artists

Aaron Douglas (1889-1979)

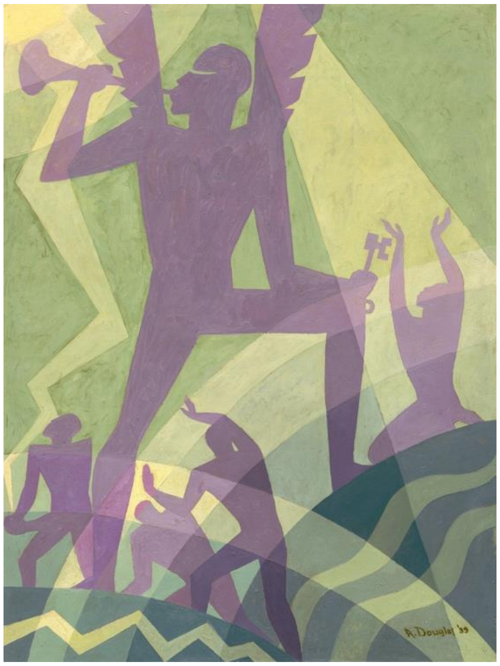
Aaron Douglas, widely acknowledged as one of the most accomplished and influential visual artists of the Harlem Renaissance, was born in Topeka, Kansas, on May 26, 1899. He attended a segregated primary school, McKinley Elementary, and Topeka High School, which was integrated.[1] Following graduation, Douglas worked in a glass factory and later in a steel foundry to earn money for college. In 1918 he enrolled at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and in 1922 earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts. The following year he accepted a teaching position at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri, where he served as instructor of art for two years. A serious reader from boyhood, Douglas kept abreast of the growing cultural movement in Harlem through the pages of two influential periodicals: *The Crisis,* published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and edited by W. E. B. Du Bois, and *Opportunity*, the monthly publication of the National Urban League edited by Charles S. Johnson. Word of Douglas's talent and ambition soon reached influential figures in Harlem, including Johnson, who was actively recruiting young African American writers, poets, and artists from across the country to come to New York. In 1924, Ethel Nance, Johnson's secretary, wrote to Douglas encouraging him to come east. Initially Douglas declined, but the following spring, at the conclusion of the school year, he resigned his teaching position and traveled to New York.

Douglas arrived in Harlem shortly after the publication of what was immediately recognized as a landmark publication: the March 1925 issue of *Survey Graphic* titled, "Harlem: Mecca for the New Negro." This special issue included an introductory essay by Alain Locke, intellectual founder of the New Negro movement, with additional essays by other progressive African American leaders. When interviewed late in his career, Douglas declared that the Harlem issue of *Survey Graphic* was the single most important factor in his decision to move to New York.



Welcomed by the leaders of the New Negro initiative, Douglas enjoyed the support of both Johnson, who arranged for him to study with German émigré artist Fritz Winold Reiss (American, 1888 - 1953), and Du Bois, who gave him a job in the mailroom of *The Crisis*. Encouraged by Locke, Reiss, Du Bois, and others to study African art as a rich source of cultural identity, Douglas also absorbed the lessons of European modernism as he forged his own visual language. Soon illustrations by Douglas began to appear in *Opportunity* and *The Crisis*. In the fall of 1925, an expanded edition of the Harlem issue of *Survey Graphic* was published in book form. Titled *The New Negro: An Interpretation,* the anthology included illustrations by Reiss and his new student, Douglas.

In 1927 Du Bois invited Douglas to join the staff of *The Crisis* as their art critic. That same year James Weldon Johnson, poet and New Negro activist, asked the young artist to illustrate his forthcoming collection of poems, *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*. Critically praised, *God's Trombones* was Johnson's masterwork and a breakthrough publication for Douglas. In his illustrations for this publication, and later in paintings and murals, Douglas drew upon his study of African art and his understanding of the intersection of cubism and art deco to create a style that soon became the visual signature of the Harlem Renaissance. Numerous commissions followed the publication of *God's Trombones*, including an invitation from Fisk University in Nashville to create a mural cycle for the new campus library. In September 1931 Douglas sailed for Paris, where he undertook additional formal training and met expatriate artist Henry Ossawa Tanner (American, 1859 - 1937). Following a year abroad, Douglas returned to New York, where he continued to receive commissions and, in 1933, mounted his first solo exhibition at Caz Delbo Gallery. In 1936 Douglas completed a four panel mural for the



Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas. Only two panels from this set survive. One of these, *Into Bondage,* is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art.

During the 1930s Douglas returned intermittently to Fisk where he served as assistant professor of art education; in 1940 he accepted a full-time position in the art department. Although teaching in Nashville, Douglas and his wife, Alta, retained their apartment in Harlem, where they remained active in Harlem's cultural community—albeit now a community severely impacted by the Great Depression. In 1944 Douglas completed a master of arts degree at Teachers College, Columbia University. At Fisk he became chairman of the art department, where he mentored several generations of students before retiring in 1966. In 1970 Douglas returned to Topeka, his hometown, for the first retrospective exhibition of his work at the Mulvane Art Center. The following year he was honored with a second retrospective at Fisk. Douglas died in Nashville in 1979 at age 80.

Selma Hortense Burke (December 31, 1900 – August 29, 1995)

Selma Burke was an American sculptor and a member of the Harlem Renaissance movement. Burke is best known for a bas relief portrait of President Franklin D. Roosevelt that inspired the profile found on the obverse of the dime. She described herself as "a people's sculptor" and created many pieces of public art, often portraits of prominent African-American figures like Duke Ellington, Mary McLeod Bethune and Booker T. Washington. In 1979, she was awarded the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award.

Selma Burke was born on December 31, 1900, in Mooresville, North Carolina, the seventh of 10 children of Reverend Neil and Mary Elizabeth Colfield Burke. Her father was an AME Church Minister who worked on the railroads for additional income. As a child, she attended a one-room segregated schoolhouse, and often played with the riverbed clay found near her home. She would later describe the feeling of squeezing the clay through her fingers as a first encounter with sculpture, saying "It was there in 1907 that I discovered me." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selma_Burke - cite_note-9 Burke's interest in sculpture was encouraged by her maternal grandmother, a painter, although her mother thought she should pursue a more financially stable career.

Burke attended Winston-Salem State University before graduating in 1924 from the St. Agnes Training School for Nurses in Raleigh. She married a childhood friend, Durant Woodward, in 1928, although the marriage ended with his death less than a year later. She later moved to Harlem to work as a private nurse.

Harlem Renaissance and education

After moving to New York City, in 1935 Burke became involved with the Harlem Renaissance cultural movement through her relationship with the writer Claude McKay, with whom she shared an apartment in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan. The relationship was brief and tumultuous – McKay would destroy her clay models when he did not find the work to be up to his standards – but it introduced Burke to an artistic community that would support her burgeoning career. Burke began teaching for the Harlem Community Arts Center under the leadership of sculptor Augusta Savage, and would go on to work for the Works Progress Administration on the New Deal Federal Art Project. One of her WPA works, a bust of Booker T. Washington, was given to Frederick Douglass High School in Manhattan in 1936.

Burke traveled to Europe twice in the 1930s, first on a Rosenwald fellowship to study sculpture in Vienna in 1933-34. She returned in 1936 to study in Paris with Aristide Maillol. While in Paris she met Henri Matisse, who praised her work. One of her most significant works from this period is "Frau Keller" (1937), a portrait of a German-Jewish woman in response to the rising Nazi threat which would convince Burke to leave Europe later that year.[4] With the onset of World War II, Burke chose to work in a factory as a truck driver for the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It was her opinion that, during the war, "artists should get out of their studios."

Burke returned to the United States and won a scholarship for Columbia University, where she would receive a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1941.

Teaching and later life

In 1940 Burke founded the Selma Burke School of Sculpture in New York City. She was committed to teaching art. She opened the Selma Burke Art School in New York City in 1946, and later opened the Selma Burke Art Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Open from 1968 to 1981, the center "was an original art center that played an integral role in the Pittsburgh art community," offering courses ranging from studio workshops to puppetry classes.

Burke used her art to make opportunities to bring people together. In Moorseville, black children were banned from use of the public library. With her rising fame, Burke chose to donate a bust of a local doctor on the condition that the ban be removed. The town accepted.

In 1949 Burke married architect Herman Kobbe, and moved with him to an artists' colony in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Kobbe died in 1955, and Burke continued to live in Pennsylvania until her death in 1995, at the age of 94.

Sculpture

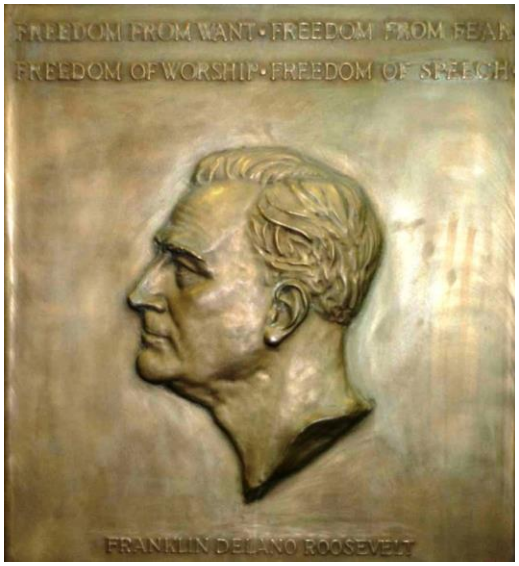
Selma Burke sculpted portraits of famous African-American figures as well as lesser-known subjects. She also explored human emotion and family relationships in more expressionistic works. While she admired the abstract modernists, her work was more concerned with rendering the symbolic human form in ways both dignified and symbolic.[4] She worked in a wide variety of media including wood, brass, alabaster, and limestone.[21]

Burke's public sculpture pieces include a bust of Duke Ellington at the Performing Arts Center in Milwaukee, as well as works on display at the Hill

House Center in Pittsburgh, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, Atlanta University, Spelman College, and the Smithsonian Museum of American Art. Her last monumental work, created in 1980 when she was 80 years old, is a bronze statue of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Charlotte, N.C.

Burke was among the artists featured at The National Urban League's inaugural exhibition at Gallery 62 in 1978. She had solo exhibitions at Princeton University and the Carnegie Museum, among other venues. Her work is held in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Portrait of F.D.R.


FREEDOM FROM WANT • FREEDOM FROM FEA
FREEDOM OF WORSHIP • FREEDOM OF SPEECH
FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

Burke's best-known work is a portrait honoring President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Four Freedoms. She competed in a national contest to win a commission for the sculpture, created from sketches made during a 45-minute sitting with Roosevelt at the White House. Burke herself "wrote to Roosevelt to request a live sitting, to which the president generously agreed, scheduling the first of two sittings on February 22, 1944." The President passed before the third such appointment could be met. Mrs. Roosevelt objected to how young Burke chose to present Roosevelt as, but she responded by saying, "This profile is not for today, but for tomorrow and all time." When asked about her experience sketching the president, "she said he wiggled too much when she began to sketch him that day. She told him to sit still and he did." The 3.5-by-2.5-foot plaque was completed in 1944 and unveiled by President Harry S. Truman in September 1945 at the Recorder of Deeds Building in Washington, D.C., where it still hangs today.[It is widely accepted that John R. Sinnock's obverse design on the Roosevelt dime was adapted from Burke's plaque. Sinnock later denied that Burke's portrait was an influence.

Romare Bearden (1911-1988)

Romare Bearden was not only one of the most talented American artists of the 20th Century but also one of the most complicated (the name as published has been corrected here and in subsequent references in this text). An extremely light-skinned African-American, he easily could have lived his life as white but refused to do so, devoting most of his art to African-American life and the struggles of blacks to achieve respect and equality.

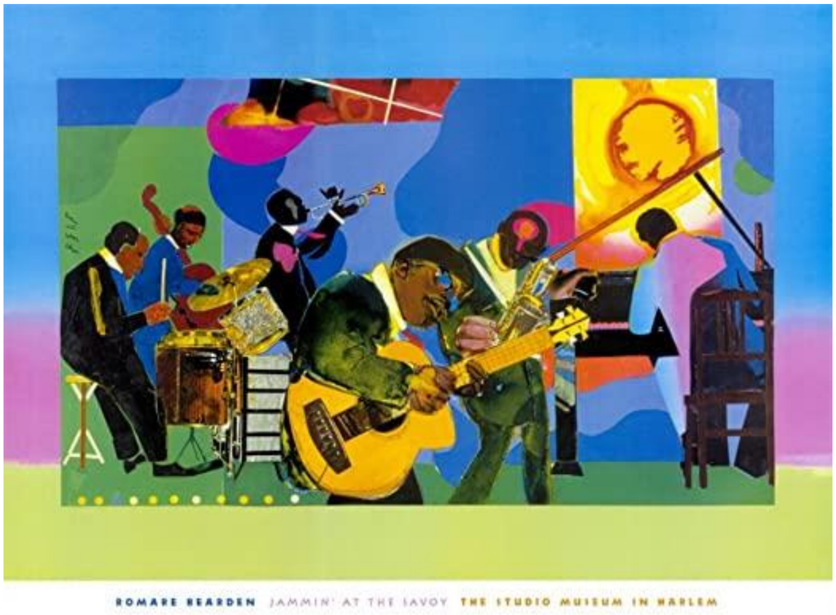
Considered one of the most important American artists of the 20th century, Romare Bearden's artwork depicted the African American culture and experience in creative and thought-provoking ways. Born in North Carolina in 1911, Bearden spent much of his career in New York City. Virtually self-taught, his early works were realistic images, often with religious themes. He later transitioned to abstract and Cubist style paintings in oil and watercolor. He is best known for his photomontage compositions made from torn images of popular magazines and assembled into visually powerful statements on African American life.

Early Life

Born September 2, 1911, in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden was the only child of Richard and Bessye Bearden. The family moved to New York City when he was a toddler. Bessye was a reporter for a leading Black newspaper and eventually become president of the Negro Women's Democratic Association. The household was a gathering place for Harlem Renaissance luminaries such as W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes and Duke Ellington.

After graduating from high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he was living with his maternal grandmother, Bearden played a little semi-pro baseball in Boston. He returned to New York City to attend college, with plans to go to medical school. He majored in science at New York University and graduated with a bachelor's degree. While there, he worked on the school humor magazine as a cartoonist and in his senior became its editor. After college he joined a Black artist group and became excited about modern art, particularly Cubism, Futurism, post-Impressionism and Surrealism. He traveled to France to study at the Sorbonne.

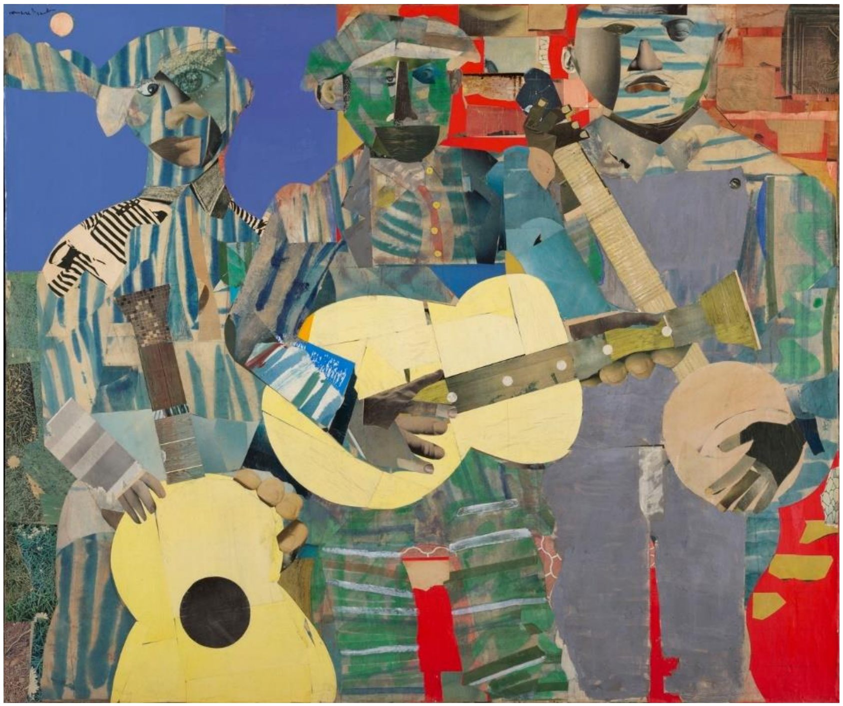
Bearden was drafted into the United States Army in 1942 and served in the all-Black 372nd Infantry Regiment until May 1945. After his return to civilian life, Bearden got a job as a New York City social caseworker to supplement his income as an artist. In 1954 he married Nanette Rohan, 27 years his junior, who was an accomplished dancer and founder of the New York Chamber Dance Company.



Art and Style

The works of Bearden's cover a wide range of techniques, themes, and styles. In college, Bearden aspired to be a cartoonist, drawing for and then editing Boston College's humor magazine in the early 1930s. He continued his cartooning after he moved to New York City to attend New York University. Studying for medical school, he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in science.

Living in Harlem, he joined a Black artists group and became excited about modern art, particularly, Cubism, post-Impressionism and Surrealism. His paintings depicted scenes of the American South. Some works were more realistic and showed influence from Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera. Other works were done in the Cubist style with rich colors and simple forms. Like many budding artists, Bearden couldn't make a living solely from his art. He juggled several jobs while taking advanced classes and occasionally drew cartoons for several African American publications including DuBois' *The Crisis*.



Collages

Bearden is perhaps best known for his collage and photomontage compositions, which he began creating in the mid-1960s. During this time, he felt he was struggling in his art between expressing his experiences as a Black man and the obscurity of abstract painting. For Bearden, abstraction wasn't clear enough for him to tell his story. He felt his art was coming to a plateau, so he started to experiment again. Combining images from magazines and colored paper, he would work in other textures such as sandpaper, graphite and paint. Influenced by the civil rights movement, his work became more representational and socially conscious. Although his collage work shows influence of abstract art, it also shows signs of African American enslaved crafts, such as patch-work quilts, and the necessity of using whatever materials are available. Taking images from mainstream pictorial magazines such as *Life* and *Look* and Black magazines such as *Ebony* and *Jet*, Bearden crafted the African American experience in his works.

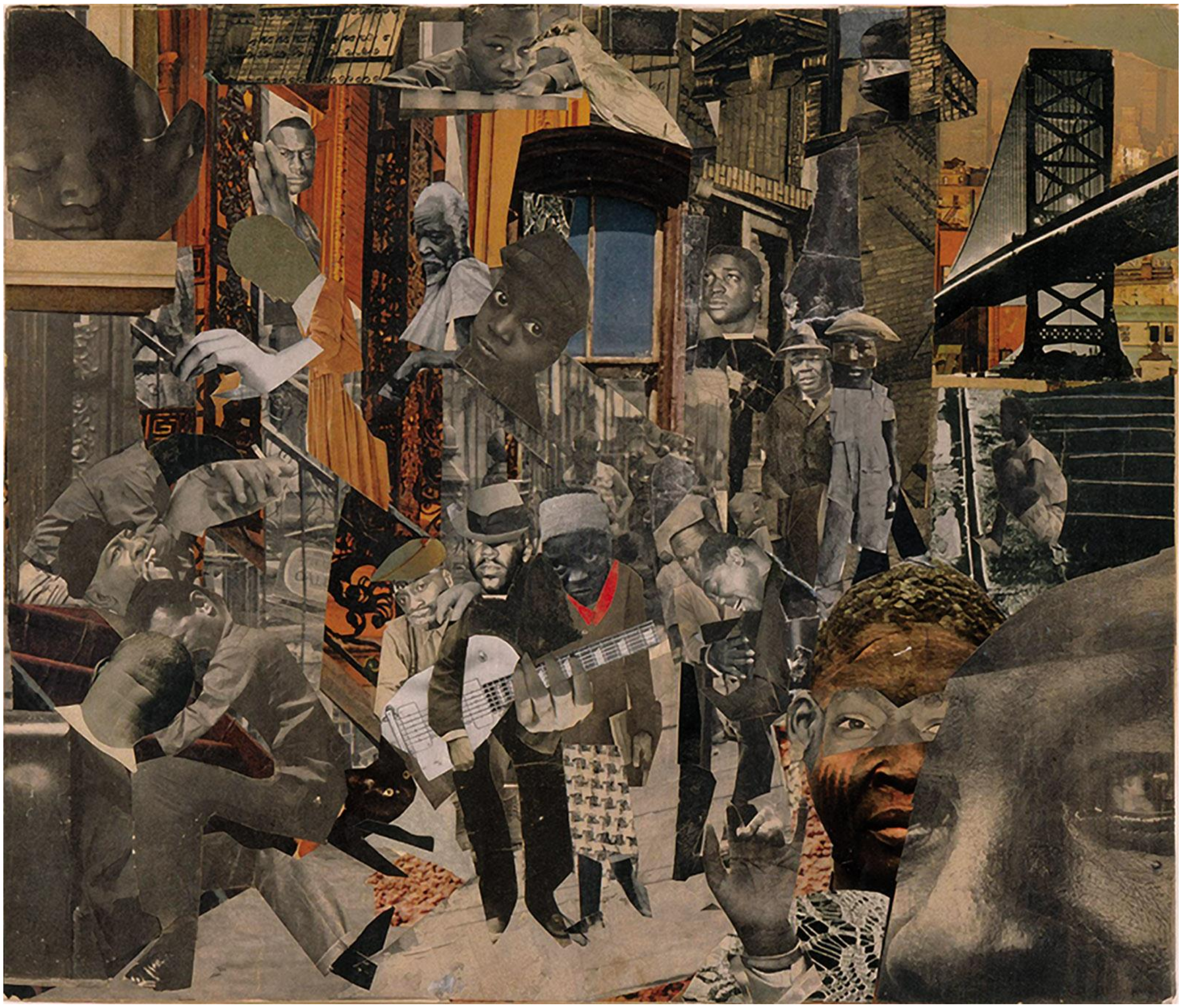
The Harlem Renaissance

Bearden's collage work has also been compared to jazz improvisation. Growing up during the Harlem Renaissance, he was exposed to many of the jazz greats. Ellington was one of his first patrons. Bearden wrote songs for Billie Holiday and Dizzy Gillespie and later designed a record cover for Wynton Marsalis. In his collages, Bearden's images reflect some of the elements of jazz with its interplay among the characters and improvisation of the materials used.

Though Bearden was vastly prolific, he is not that widely recognized as a major American artist. The American art world possessed the same prejudices and segregation of society. Also, Bearden's work is hard to categorize. But during this life and after, his exhibitions have received enthusiastic reviews and critical praise and he was recognized with multiple awards and honorary doctorates.

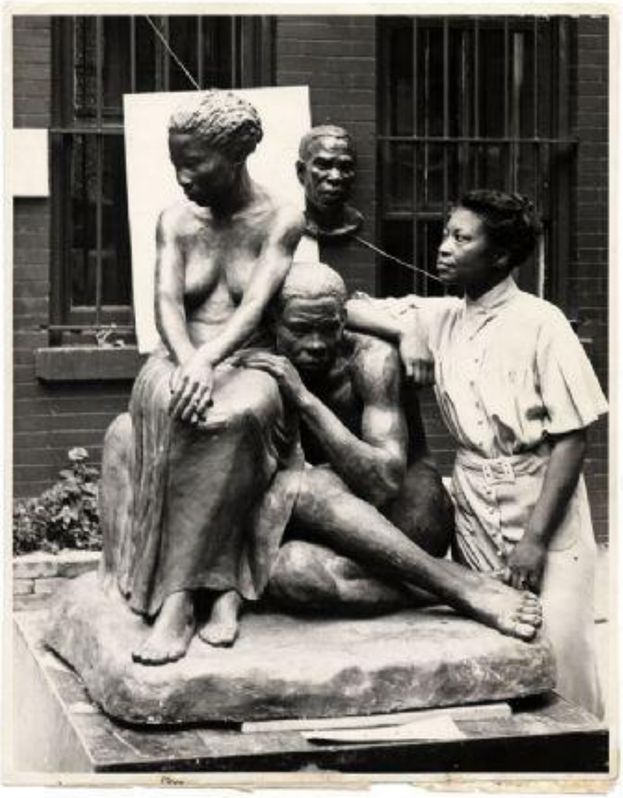
Death

By age 58, Bearden had reached a level of recognition (and income) that he was able to become a full-time artist with his own studio. He earned grants and commissions and was often a visiting professor at universities. By the 1960s, his medium of choice had moved from painting to collages, though he continued to paint large scale murals and series pieces for museum and gallery exhibitions. Though he was still working in his studio, Bearden contracted bone cancer and on March 12, 1988, died in New York City.



Augusta Savage
(1892-1962)

Determined from childhood to become a sculptor, Augusta Savage moved to New York City in the early 1920s to study at Cooper Union's School of Art. There her talent as an artist blossomed and was quickly recognized, landing Savage a commission to fashion a portrait bust of scholar W. E. B. Du Bois. She would sculpt likenesses of many other African-American leaders, among them black nationalist and entrepreneur Marcus Garvey.



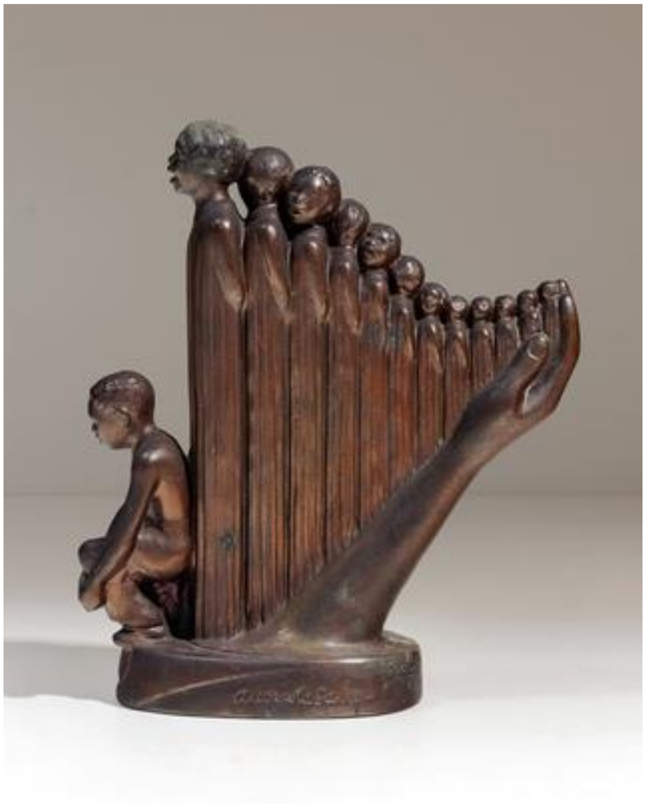
In 1924 Savage sculpted a plaster bust of her nephew, Ellis Ford, that is widely regarded as her finest work. The bust, entitled Gamin (French for "street urchin"), won Savage a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship—and with it a year's study in Paris.

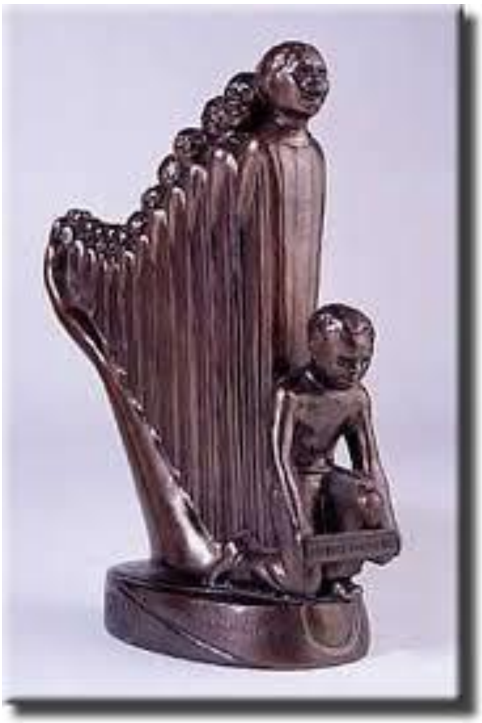
Upon her return to Harlem, Savage began teaching aspiring artists. In 1932 she established the Savage Studio of Arts and Crafts, an arts-education center for adults. She later became the first director of Harlem's Community Arts Center. Funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the center invited African Americans to learn about their culture through the study of fine arts.

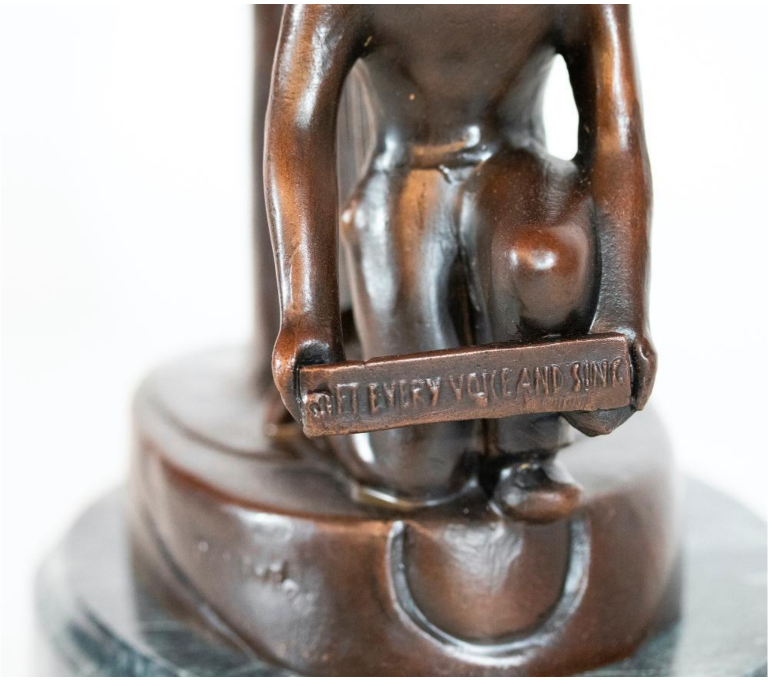
In 1939, Savage was commissioned to create a sculpture for the New York World's Fair. Titled “The Harp,” the work was strong ly influenced by James Weldon Johnson's 1900 song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Always intensely involved in the Harlem arts community, Savage was a longtime member of the "306 Group"—so named for the art studio at 306 West 141st Street, where Savage exchanged techniques and ideas with black artists such as Charles Alston, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, and Morgan and Marvin Smith.

Bio of Augusta Savage: https://youtu.be/b14P5urRJHo
Bio: https://americanart.si.edu/artist/augusta-savage-4269
Video of Augusta Savage Sculpting: https://youtu.be/koMXHaPlLEs

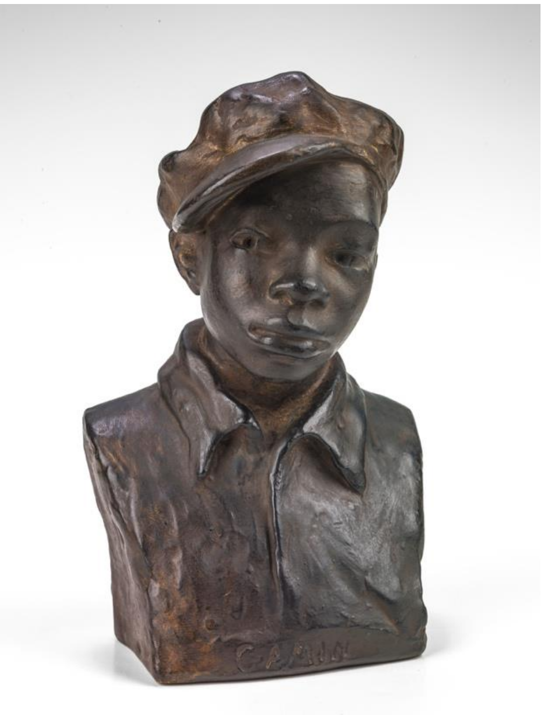




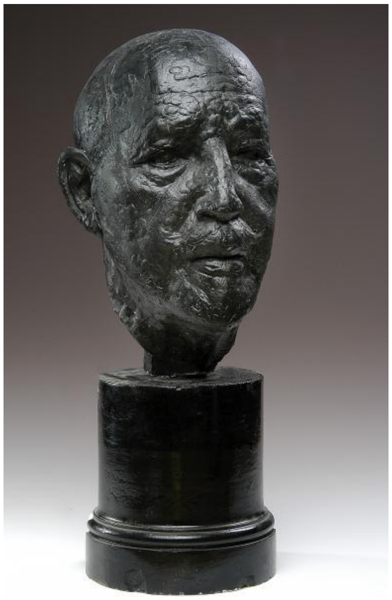

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

The Harp

Gamin, The Street Urchin



Bust of WEB DuBois



Non Harlem Renaissance Poets and Poetry

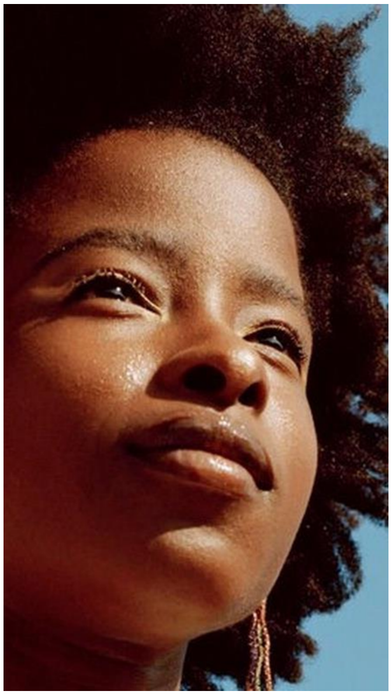
Amanda Gorman

Amanda S. C. Gorman (born 1998) is an American poet and activist. Her work focuses on issues of oppression, feminism, race, and marginalization, as well as the African diaspora. Gorman was the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate. She published the poetry book The One for Whom Food Is Not Enough in 2015. In 2021, she delivered her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden. Her inauguration poem generated international acclaim, and shortly thereafter, two of her books achieved best-seller status, and she obtained a professional management contract.

Gorman was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1998. She was raised by her single mother, Joan Wicks, a 6th-grade English teacher in Watts, with her two siblings. She has a twin sister, Gabrielle, who is an activist and filmmaker. Gorman has said she grew up in an environment with limited television access. She has described her young self as a "weird child" who enjoyed reading and writing and was encouraged by her mother.

Gorman has an auditory processing disorder and is hypersensitive to sound. She also had a speech impediment during childhood. Gorman participated in speech therapy during her childhood and Elida Kocharian of *The Harvard Crimson* wrote in 2018, "Gorman doesn't view her speech impediment as a crutch—rather, she sees it as a gift and a strength." Gorman told *The Harvard Gazette* in 2018, "I always saw it as a strength because since I was experiencing these obstacles in terms of my auditory and vocal skills, I became really good at reading and writing. I realized that at a young age when I was reciting the Marianne Deborah Williamson quote that 'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure' to my mom." In 2021, Gorman told *CBS This Morning* co-host Anthony Mason that she used songs as a form of speech therapy, and explained, "My favorite thing to practice was the song 'Aaron Burr, Sir,' from *Hamilton* because it is jam-packed with R's. And I said, 'if I can keep up with Leslie in this track, then I am on my way to being able to say this R in a poem."

Gorman attended New Roads, a private school in Santa Monica, for grades K–12. As a senior, she received a Milken Family Foundation college scholarship. She studied sociology at Harvard College, graduating *cum laude* in 2020 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa.



Gorman's art and activism focus on issues of oppression, feminism, race, and marginalization, as well as the African diaspora. She has said she was inspired to become a youth delegate for the United Nations in 2013 after watching a speech by Pakistani Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai. Gorman was chosen as the first youth poet laureate of Los Angeles in 2014. In 2014 it was reported that Gorman was "editing the first draft of a novel the 16-year-old has been writing over the last two years."[28] She published the poetry book *The One for Whom Food Is Not Enough* in 2015.

In 2016, Gorman founded the nonprofit organization One Pen One Page, a youth writing and leadership program. In 2017, she became the first author to be featured on XQ Institute's Book of the Month, a monthly giveaway to share inspiring Gen Z's favorite books. She wrote a tribute for black athletes for Nike and has a book deal with Viking Children's Books to write two children's picture books.

In 2017, Gorman became the first youth poet to open the literary season for the Library of Congress, and she has read her poetry on MTV. She wrote "In This Place: An American Lyric" for her September 2017 performance at the Library of Congress, which commemorated the inauguration of Tracy K. Smith as Poet Laureate of the United States. The Morgan Library and Museum acquired her poem "In This Place (An American Lyric)" and displayed it in 2018 near works by Elizabeth Bishop.

While at Harvard, Gorman became the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate in April 2017. She was chosen from five finalists. In 2017, Gorman won a $10,000 grant from media company *OZY* in the annual OZY Genius Awards through which 10 college students are given "the opportunity to pursue their outstanding ideas and envisioned innovations".

In 2017, Gorman said she intends to run for president in 2036, and she has subsequently often repeated this hope. On being selected as one of *Glamour* magazine's 2018 "College Women of the Year", she said: "Seeing the ways that I as a young black woman can inspire people is something I want to continue in politics. I don't want to just speak works; I want to turn them into realities and actions." After she read her poem "The Hill We Climb" at President Joe Biden's inauguration in 2021, Hillary Clinton tweeted her support for Gorman's 2036 aspiration.

In 2019, Gorman was chosen as one of *The Root* magazine's "Young Futurists", an annual list of "the 25 best and brightest young African-Americans who excel in the fields of social justice and activism, arts and culture, enterprise and corporate innovation, science and technology, and green innovation".

In May 2020, Gorman appeared in an episode of the web series *Some Good News* hosted by John Krasinski, where she had the opportunity to virtually meet Oprah Winfrey and issued a virtual commencement speech to those who could not attend commencements due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.

In 2020, Gorman presented "Earthrise", a poem focused on the climate crisis.

Gorman read her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of Joe Biden on January 20, 2021, and is the youngest poet to read at a presidential inauguration in United States history. Jill Biden recommended her for the inauguration. After January 6, 2021, Gorman amended her poem's wording to address the storming of the United States Capitol. During the week before the inauguration, she told *Washington Post* book critic Ron Charles, "My hope is that my poem will represent a moment of unity for our country" and "with my words, I'll be able to speak to a new chapter and era for our nation."

Videos

Amanda Gorman reads her inaugural poem, "The Hill We Climb."https://youtu.be/LZ055ilIiN4

Student Ted Talk: Using Your Voice Is A Political Choice: https://youtu.be/zaZBgqfEa1E

"Roar" https://youtu.be/PD2_uKaugPI

"The Miracle of Morning" https://youtu.be/XOieGJl6g4s

Dance Poetry Performance: https://youtu.be/2eJfmvAHUsk

The Hill We Climb by: Amanda Gorman

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade.
We've braved the belly of the beast,
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,
and the norms and notions
of what just is
isn't always just-ice.
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it.
Somehow we do it.
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken,
but simply unfinished.
We the successors of a country and a time
where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one.
And yes we are far from polished.
Far from pristine.
But that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect.
We are striving to forge a union with purpose,
to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man.
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us,
but what stands before us.
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside.
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another.
We seek harm to none and harmony for all.
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true,
that even as we grieved, we grew,
that even as we hurt, we hoped,
that even as we tired, we tried,
that we'll forever be tied together, victorious.
Not because we will never again know defeat,
but because we will never again sow division.
Scripture tells us to envision

that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
and no one shall make them afraid.
If we're to live up to our own time,
then victory won't lie in the blade.
But in all the bridges we've made,
that is the promise to glade,
the hill we climb.
If only we dare.
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it.
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it.
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.
And this effort very nearly succeeded.
But while democracy can be periodically delayed,
it can never be permanently defeated.
In this truth,
in this faith we trust.
For while we have our eyes on the future,
history has its eyes on us.
This is the era of just redemption
we feared at its inception.
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter.
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert,
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was,
but move to what shall be.
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free.
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation,
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation.
Our blunders become their burdens.
But one thing is certain,
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy,

and change our children's birthright.
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with.
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west.
We will rise from the windswept northeast,
where our forefathers first realized revolution.
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states.
We will rise from the sunbaked south.
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.
And every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful.
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid,
the new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.

Poems by Maya Angelou

I know why the caged bird sings

A free bird leaps on the back
Of the wind and floats downstream
Till the current ends and dips his wing
In the orange suns rays
And dares to claim the sky.

But a BIRD that stalks down his narrow cage
Can seldom see through his bars of rage
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings with a fearful trill
Of things unknown but longed for still
And his tune is heard on the distant hill for
The caged bird sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
And the trade winds soft through
The sighing trees
And the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright
Lawn and he names the sky his own.

But a caged BIRD stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings with
A fearful trill of things unknown
But longed for still and his
Tune is heard on the distant hill
For the caged bird sings of freedom.

Still I Rise (Video Link: Maya Angelou recites "Still I Rise.")

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Phenomenal Woman (Video Link: Audio of Maya Angelou reciting "Phenomenal Woman.")

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman

Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand

Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Excerpt from On the Pulse of Morning

Maya Angelou's Inaugural Poem for President Bill Clinton
Video Link: **MAYA ANGELOU READS INAUGURAL POEM**

A Rock, A River, A Tree
Hosts to species long since departed,
Marked the mastodon,
The dinosaur, who left dried tokens
Of their sojourn here
On our planet floor,
Any broad alarm of their hastening doom
Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages.

But today, the Rock cries out to us, clearly, forcefully,
Come, you may stand upon my
Back and face your distant destiny,
But seek no haven in my shadow,
I will give you no hiding place down here.

You, created only a little lower than
The angels, have crouched too long in
The bruising darkness
Have lain too long
Facedown in ignorance,
Your mouths spilling words
Armed for slaughter.

The Rock cries out to us today,
You may stand upon me,
But do not hide your face.

Maya Angelou Biography

Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 4, 1928. She grew up in St. Louis and Stamps, Arkansas. She was an author, poet, historian, songwriter, playwright, dancer, stage and screen producer, director, performer, singer, and civil rights activist. She was best known for her seven autobiographical books: *Mom & Me & Mom* (Random House, 2013); *Letter to My Daughter* (Random House, 2008); *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (Random House, 1986); *The Heart of a Woman* (Random House, 1981); *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (Random House, 1976); *Gather Together in My Name* (Random House, 1974); and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (Random House, 1969), which was nominated for the National Book Award.

Among her volumes of poetry are *A Brave and Startling Truth* (Random House, 1995); *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (Random House, 1994); *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now* (Random House, 1993); *I Shall Not Be Moved* (Random House, 1990); *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* (Random House, 1983); *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* (Random House, 1975); and *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie* (Random House, 1971), which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

In 1959, at the request of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Angelou became the northern coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. From 1961 to 1962 she was associate editor of *The Arab Observer* in Cairo, Egypt, the only English-language news weekly in the Middle East, and from 1964 to 1966 she was feature editor of the *African Review* in Accra, Ghana. She returned to the United States in 1974 and was appointed by Gerald Ford to the Bicentennial Commission and later by Jimmy Carter to the Commission for International Woman of the Year. She accepted a lifetime appointment in 1982 as Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In 1993, Angelou wrote and delivered a poem, "On The Pulse of the Morning," at the inauguration for President Bill Clinton at his request. In 2000, she received the National Medal of Arts, and in 2010 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.

The first black woman director in Hollywood, Angelou wrote, produced, directed, and starred in productions for stage, film, and television. In 1971, she wrote the original screenplay and musical score for the film *Georgia, Georgia*, and was both author and executive producer of a five-part television miniseries "Three Way Choice." She also wrote and produced several prize-winning documentaries, including "Afro-Americans in the Arts," a PBS special for which she received the Golden Eagle Award. Angelou was twice nominated for a Tony award for acting: once for her Broadway debut in *Look Away* (1973), and again for her performance in *Roots* (1977).

Angelou died on May 28, 2014, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where she had served as Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University since 1982. She was eighty-six.

Poems by Robert Frost

A Time to Talk

When a friend calls to me from the road
And slows his horse to a meaning walk,
I don’t stand still and look around
On all the hills I haven’t hoed,
And shout from where I am, "What is it?"
No, not as there is a time to talk.
I thrust my hoe in the mellow ground,
Blade-end up and five feet tall,
And plod: I go up to the stone wall
For a friendly visit.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

A Minor Bird by Robert Frost

I have wished a bird would fly away,
And not sing by my house all day;

Have clapped my hands at him from the door
When it seemed as if I could bear no more.

The fault must partly have been in me.
The bird was not to blame for his key.

And of course there must be something wrong
In wanting to silence any song.

Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening Click this to see Frost recite this poem.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

The Gift Outright

Link: Robert Frost Reads During Inauguration

Poem recited at John F. Kennedy's Inauguration by Robert Frost

The land was ours before we were the land's
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she will become.

Biography of Robert Frost

Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco, where his father, William Prescott Frost Jr., and his mother, Isabelle Moodie, had moved from Pennsylvania shortly after marrying. After the death of his father from tuberculosis when Frost was eleven years old, he moved with his mother and sister, Jeanie, who was two years younger, to Lawrence, Massachusetts. He became interested in reading and writing poetry during his high school years in Lawrence, enrolled at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1892, and later at Harvard University in Boston, though he never earned a formal college degree.

Frost drifted through a string of occupations after leaving school, working as a teacher, cobbler, and editor of the Lawrence Sentinel. His first published poem, “My Butterfly," appeared on November 8, 1894, in the New York newspaper The Independent.

In 1895, Frost married Elinor Miriam White, whom he’d shared valedictorian honors with in high school and who was a major inspiration for his poetry until her death in 1938. The couple moved to England in 1912, after they tried and failed at farming in New Hampshire. It was abroad that Frost met and was influenced by such contemporary British poets as Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, and Robert Graves. While in England, Frost also established a friendship with the poet Ezra Pound, who helped to promote and publish his work.

By the time Frost returned to the United States in 1915, he had published two full-length collections, A Boy’s Will (Henry Holt and Company, 1913) and North of Boston (Henry Holt and Company, 1914), and his reputation was established. By the 1920s, he was the most celebrated poet in America, and with each new book—including New Hampshire (Henry Holt and Company, 1923), A Further Range (Henry Holt and Company, 1936), Steeple Bush (Henry Holt and Company, 1947), and In the Clearing (Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1962)—his fame and honors (including four Pulitzer Prizes) increased. Frost served as consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress from 1958 to 1959.

Though his work is principally associated with the life and landscape of New England—and though he was a poet of traditional verse forms and metrics who remained steadfastly aloof from the poetic movements and fashions of his time—Frost is anything but merely a regional poet. The author of searching and often dark meditations on universal themes, he is a quintessentially modern poet in his adherence to language as it is actually spoken, in the psychological complexity of his portraits, and in the degree to which his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony.

In a 1970 review of The Poetry of Robert Frost, the poet Daniel Hoffman describes Frost’s early work as “the Puritan ethic turned astonishingly lyrical and enabled to say out loud the sources of its own delight in the world," and comments on Frost's career as the "American Bard": "He became a national celebrity, our nearly official poet laureate, and a great performer in the tradition of that earlier master of the literary vernacular, Mark Twain."

About Frost, President John F. Kennedy, at whose inauguration the poet delivered a poem, said, "He has bequeathed his nation a body of imperishable verse from which Americans will forever gain joy and understanding."

Robert Frost lived and taught for many years in Massachusetts and Vermont, and died in Boston on January 29, 1963.

Poetry by Shel Silverstein

Where the Sidewalk Ends

There is a place where the sidewalk ends
And before the street begins,
And there the grass grows soft and white,
And there the sun burns crimson bright,
And there the moon-bird rests from his flight
To cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black
And the dark street winds and bends.
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow
We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And watch where the chalk-white arrows go
To the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,
For the children, they mark, and the children, they know
The place where the sidewalk ends.

The Little Boy and the Old Man

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."
Said the old man, "I do that too."
The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."
"I do that too," laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, "I often cry."
The old man nodded, "So do I."
"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems
Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.

Rain
I opened my eyes
And looked up at the rain,
And it dripped in my head
And flowed into my brain,
And all that I hear as I lie in my bed
Is the slishity-slosh of the rain in my head.

I step very softly,
I walk very slow,
I can't do a handstand--
I might overflow,
So pardon the wild crazy thing I just said--
I'm just not the same since there's rain in my head.

Spoiled Brat

The spoiled brat cut a hole in her hat,
The spoiled brat put a coat on the cat,
The spoiled brat got into a spat
'Bout whether a rodent's a mouse or a rat.

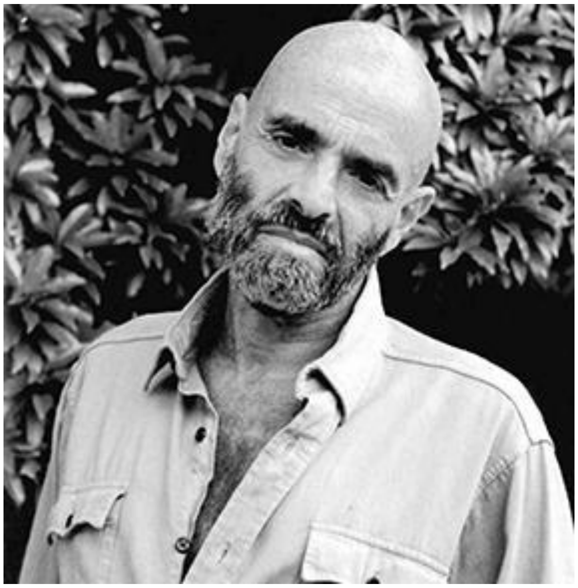
The spoiled brat broke a bike with her bat,
The spoiled brat told the policeman to scat,
The spoiled brat said her sister was fat,
And sat on her birthday cake 'til it was flat.

The spoiled brat, she cussed and she spat,
The spoiled brat pulled the wings off a gnat,
The spoiled brat fell into a vat,
Got cooked up for dinner and that was that.

But in spite of the pepper,
The salt and the sage,
The onions and garlis and oil,
Nobody could touch
A bite of that brat
Because she was so spoiled.

Whatif

Last night, while I lay thinking here,
some Whatifs crawled inside my ear
and pranced and partied all night long
and sang their same old Whatif song:
Whatif I'm dumb in school?
Whatif they've closed the swimming pool?
Whatif I get beat up?
Whatif there's poison in my cup?
Whatif I start to cry?
Whatif I get sick and die?
Whatif I flunk that test?
Whatif green hair grows on my chest?
Whatif nobody likes me?
Whatif a bolt of lightning strikes me?
Whatif I don't grow talle?
Whatif my head starts getting smaller?
Whatif the fish won't bite?
Whatif the wind tears up my kite?
Whatif they start a war?
Whatif my parents get divorced?
Whatif the bus is late?
Whatif my teeth don't grow in straight?
Whatif I tear my pants?
Whatif I never learn to dance?
Everything seems well, and then
the nighttime Whatifs strike again!



Shel Silverstein

Shel Silverstein was born on September 25, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois, and began writing and drawing at a young age. He became a cartoonist, playwright, poet, performer, recording artist, and Grammy-winning, Oscar-nominated songwriter.

Silverstein is best known as the author of iconic books of prose and poetry for young readers. His works include such modern classics as *Lafcadio: The Lion Who Shot Back* (1963), *The Giving Tree* (1964), *A Giraffe and a Half* (1964), *The Missing Piece* (1976), and *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O* (1981). His immensely popular poetry collections are *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, a 1974 Michigan Young Readers Award winner; *A Light in the Attic*, recipient of the School Library Journal Best Books Award in 1982; *Falling Up* (1996); and *Don't Bump the Glump! And Other Fantasies*, which was originally published in 1963 and reissued in 2008. *Runny Babbit*, a posthumous poetry collection of spoonerisms, was conceived and completed before his death.

Silverstein's books, which he also illustrated, are characterized by a deft mixing of the sly and the serious, the macabre, and the just plain silly. His unique imagination and bold brand of humor is beloved by countless adults and children throughout the world. He died on May 10, 1999.

Poems by Jack Prelutsky

Last Night I Dreamed of Chickens

Last night I dreamed of chickens,
there were chickens everywhere,
they were standing on my stomach,
they were nesting in my hair,
they were pecking at my pillow,
they were hopping on my head,
they were ruffling up their feathers
as they raced about my bed.

They were on the chairs and tables,
they were on the chandeliers,
they were roosting in the corners,
they were clucking in my ears,
there were chickens, chickens, chickens
for as far as I could see...
when I woke today, I noticed
there were eggs on top of me.

Be Glad Your Nose is on Your Face

Be glad your nose is on your face,
not pasted on some other place,
for if it were where it is not,
you might dislike your nose a lot.

Imagine if your precious nose
were sandwiched in between your toes,
that clearly would not be a treat,
for you'd be forced to smell your feet.

Your nose would be a source of dread
were it attached atop your head,
it soon would drive you to despair,
forever tickled by your hair.

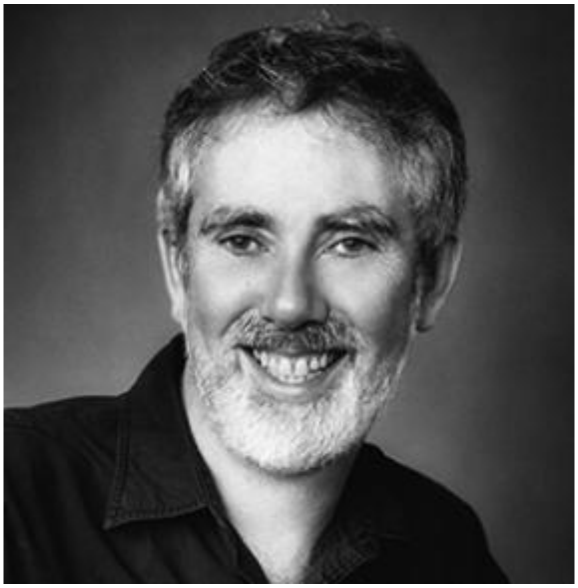
Within your ear, your nose would be
an absolute catastrophe,
for when you were obliged to sneeze,
your brain would rattle from the breeze.

Your nose, instead, through thick and thin,
remains between your eyes and chin,
not pasted on some other place--
be glad your nose is on your face!

Super Samson Simpson

I am Super Samson Simpson,
I'm superlatively strong,
I like to carry elephants,
I do it all day long,
I pick up half a dozen
and hoist them in the air,
it's really somewhat simple,
for I have strength to spare.

My muscles are enormous,
they bulge from top to toe,
and when I carry elephants,
they ripple to and fro,
but I am not the strongest
in the Simpson family,
for when I carry elephants,
my grandma carries me.



Jack Prelutsky

On September 8, 1940, Jack Prelutsky was born in Brooklyn, and attended Hunter College in New York City. Although he claims to have hated poetry through most of his childhood, he rediscovered poetry later in life, and has devoted many years since to writing fresh, humorous poetry aimed specifically at kids.

“I realized poetry was a means of communication, that it could be as exciting or as boring as that person or that experience.”

After stints as a truckdriver, photographer, folksinger, and more, he is now the author of more than forty collections of original verse and anthologies of children’s poetry, including: *Stardines Swim High Across the Sky: and Other Poems* (2013); *The Swamps of Sleethe: Poems From Beyond the Solar System* (2009); *Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem* (2008); *Be Glad Your Nose Is on Your Facey And Other Poems*(Greenwillow Books/HarperCollins, 2008); *Behold the Bold Umbrellaphant and Other Poems* (2006); *The Beauty of the Beast: Poems from the Animal Kingdom*(2006); *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*(1983); *Nightmares: Poems to Trouble Your Sleep* (1978), and The Queen of Eene (1976).

In 2006, Prelutsky was named the first Children’s Poet Laureate by the Poetry Foundation. He lives in Seattle, Washington, and spends much of his time presenting poems to children in schools and libraries throughout the United States.

Carl Sandburg Poetry

Lost

Desolate and lone
All night long on the lake
Where fog trails and mist creeps,
The whistle of a boat
Calls and cries unendingly,
Like some lost child
In tears and trouble
Hunting the harbor’s breast
And the harbor’s eyes.

Fog

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Testament

I give the undertakers permission to haul my body
to the graveyard and to lay away all, the head, the
feet, the hands, all: I know there is something left
over they can not put away.

Let the nanny goats and the billy goats of the shanty
people eat the clover over my grave and if any yellow
hair or any blue smoke of flowers is good enough to grow
over me let the dirty-fisted children of the shanty
people pick these flowers.

I have had my chance to live with the people who have
too much and the people who have too little and I chose
one of the two and I have told no man why.

Biography of Carl Sandburg

Carl Sandburg was born in Galesburg, Illinois, on January 6, 1878. His parents, August and Clara Johnson, had immigrated to America from the north of Sweden. After encountering several August Johnsons in his job for the railroad, the Sandburg's father renamed the family. The Sandburgs were very poor; Carl left school at the age of thirteen to work odd jobs, from laying bricks to dishwashing, to help support his family. At seventeen, he traveled west to Kansas as a hobo. He then served eight months in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American war. While serving, Sandburg met a student at Lombard College, the small school located in Sandburg's hometown. The young man convinced Sandburg to enroll in Lombard after his return from the war.

Sandburg worked his way through school, where he attracted the attention of Professor Philip Green Wright, who not only encouraged Sandburg's writing, but paid for the publication of his first volume of poetry, a pamphlet called *Reckless Ecstasy* (1904). While Sandburg attended Lombard for four years, he never received a diploma (he would later receive honorary degrees from Lombard, Knox College, and Northwestern University). After college, Sandburg moved to Milwaukee, where he worked as an advertising writer and a newspaper reporter. While there, he met and married Lillian Steichen (whom he called Paula), sister of the photographer Edward Steichen. A Socialist sympathizer at that point in his life, Sandburg then worked for the Social-Democrat Party in Wisconsin and later acted as secretary to the first Socialist mayor of Milwaukee from 1910 to 1912.

The Sandburgs soon moved to Chicago, where Carl became an editorial writer for the Chicago *Daily News*. Harriet Monroe had just started *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, and began publishing Sandburg's poems, encouraging him to continue writing in the free-verse, Whitman-like style he had cultivated in college. Monroe liked the poems' homely speech, which distinguished Sandburg from his predecessors. It was during this period that Sandburg was recognized as a member of the Chicago literary renaissance, which included Ben Hecht, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, and Edgar Lee Masters. He established his reputation with *Chicago Poems* (1916), and then *Cornhuskers* (1918), for which he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1919. Soon after the publication of these volumes Sandburg wrote *Smoke and Steel* (1920), his first prolonged attempt to find beauty in modern industrialism. With these three volumes, Sandburg became known for his free verse poems that portrayed industrial America.

In the twenties, he started some of his most ambitious projects, including his study of Abraham Lincoln. From childhood, Sandburg loved and admired the legacy of President Lincoln. For thirty years he sought out and collected material, and gradually began the writing of the six-volume definitive biography of the former president. The twenties also saw Sandburg's collections of American folklore, the ballads in *The American Songbag* and *The New American Songbag* (1950), and books for children. These later volumes contained pieces collected from brief tours across America which Sandburg took each year, playing his banjo or guitar, singing folk-songs, and reciting poems.

In the 1930s, Sandburg continued his celebration of America with *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow* (1932), *The People, Yes* (1936), and the second part of his Lincoln biography, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (1939), for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. He received a second Pulitzer Prize for his *Complete Poems* in 1950. His final volumes of verse were *Harvest Poems, 1910-1960* (1960) and *Honey and Salt* (1963). Carl Sandburg died on July 22, 1967.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Poetry

The Debt

This is the debt I pay
Just for one riotous day,
Years of regret and grief,
Sorrow without relief.

Pay it I will to the end—
Until the grave, my friend,
Gives me a true release—
Gives me the clasp of peace.

Slight was the thing I bought,
Small was the debt I thought,
Poor was the loan at best—
God! but the interest!

We Wear the Mask

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
    We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
    We wear the mask!

A Musical

Outside the rain upon the street,
    The sky all grim of hue,
Inside, the music–painful sweet,
    And yet I heard but you.

As is a thrilling violin,
    So is your voice to me,
And still above the other strains,
    It sang in ecstasy.

In the Morning

'LIAS! 'Lias! Bless de Lawd!
Don' you know de day's erbroad?
Ef you don' git up, you scamp,
Dey'll be trouble in dis camp.
Tink I gwine to let you sleep
W'ile I meks yo' boa'd an' keep?
Dat's a putty howdy-do-
Don' you hyeah me, 'Lias -you?

Bet ef I come crost dis flo'
You won' fin' no time to sno'
Daylight all a-shinin' in
W'ile you sleep -w'y hit's a sin!
Aint de can'le-light enough
To bu'n out widout a snuff,
But you go de mo'nin' thoo
Bu'nin' up de daylight too?

'Lias, don' you hyeah me call?
No use tu'nin' to'ds de wall;
I kin hyeah dat mattuss squeak;
Don' you hyeah me w'en I speak?
Dis hyeah clock done struck off six-
Ca'line, bring me dem ah sticks!
Oh, you down, suh; huh, you down-
Look hyeah, don' you daih to frown.

Ma'ch yo'se'f an wash yo' face,
Don' you splattah all de place;
I got somep'n else to do,
'Sides jes' cleanin' aftah you.
Tek dat comb an' fix yo' haid!-
Looks jes' lak a feddah baid.

Look hyeah, boy, I let you see
You sha' n't roll yo' eyes at me.

Come hyeah; bring me dat ah strap!
Boy, I'll whup you 'twell you drap;
You done felt yo’se’f too strong,
An' you sholy got me wrong.
Set down at dat table thaih;
Jes' you whimpah ef you daih!
Evah mo'nin' on dis place,
Seem lak I mus' lose my grace.

Fol' yo' han's an' bow yo' haid-
Wait ontwell de blessin' 's said;
'Lawd, have mussy on ouah souls-'
(Don' you daih to tech dem rolls-)
'Bless de food we gwine to eat-'
(You set still -I see yo' feet;
You jes' try dat trick agin!)
'Gin us peace an' joy. Amen!'

Biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar

Born on June 27, 1872, Paul Laurence Dunbar was one of the first African-American poets to gain national recognition. His parents Joshua and Matilda Murphy Dunbar were freed slaves from Kentucky. His parents separated shortly after his birth, but Dunbar would draw on their stories of plantation life throughout his writing career. By the age of fourteen, Dunbar had poems published in the *Dayton Herald*. While in high school he edited the *Dayton Tattler*, a short-lived black newspaper published by classmate Orville Wright.

Despite being a fine student, Dunbar was financially unable to attend college and took a job as an elevator operator. In 1892, a former teacher invited him to read his poems at a meeting of the Western Association of Writers; his work impressed his audience to such a degree that the popular poet James Whitcomb Riley wrote him a letter of encouragement. In 1893, Dunbar self-published a collection called *Oak and Ivy*. To help pay the publishing costs, he sold the book for a dollar to people riding in his elevator.
Later that year, Dunbar moved to Chicago, hoping to find work at the first World's Fair. He befriended Frederick Douglass, who found him a job as a clerk, and also arranged for him to read a selection of his poems. Douglass said of Dunbar that he was "the most promising young colored man in America." By 1895, Dunbar's poems began appearing in major national newspapers and magazines, such as *The New York Times*. With the help of friends, he published the second collection, *Majors and Minors* (Hadley & Hadley, 1895). The poems written in standard English were called "majors," and those in dialect were termed "minors." Although the "major" poems outnumber those written in dialect, it was the dialect poems that brought Dunbar the most attention. The noted novelist and critic William Dean Howells gave a favorable review to the poems in *Harper's Weekly*.

This recognition helped Dunbar gain national and international acclaim, and in 1897 he embarked on a six-month reading tour of England. He also brought out a new collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1896). Upon returning to America, Dunbar received a clerkship at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and shortly thereafter he married the writer Alice Ruth Moore. While living in Washington, Dunbar published a short story collection, *Folks from Dixie* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1898), a novel entitled *The Uncalled* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1898), and two more collections of poems, *Lyrics of the Hearthside* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1899) and *Poems of Cabin and Field* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1899). He also contributed lyrics to a number of musical reviews.

In 1898, Dunbar's health deteriorated; he believed the dust in the library contributed to his tuberculosis and left his job to dedicate himself full time to writing and giving readings. Over the next five years, he would produce three more novels and three short story collections. Dunbar separated from his wife in 1902, and shortly thereafter he suffered a nervous breakdown and a bout of pneumonia. Although ill and drinking too much in attempt to soothe his coughing, Dunbar continued to write poems. His collections from this time include *Lyrics of Love and Laughter* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1903), *Howdy, Howdy, Howdy* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1905), and *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (Dodd, Mead and Co., 1903). These books confirmed his position as America's premier black poet. Dunbar's steadily deteriorating health caused him to return to his mother's home in Dayton, Ohio, where he died on February 9, 1906, at the age of thirty-three.

Edgar Allan Poe Poetry

Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love--
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me--
Yes!--that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we--
Of many far wiser than we--
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling--my darling--my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

To My Mother

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of “Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
In setting my Virginia’s spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
   While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—
         Only this and nothing more.”

   Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
   Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
   From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
         Nameless *here* for evermore.

   And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
   So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
   “’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
         This it is and nothing more.”

   Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
   But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
   And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;—
         Darkness there and nothing more.

   Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore?”
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
’Tis the wind and nothing more!”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”
Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking

Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

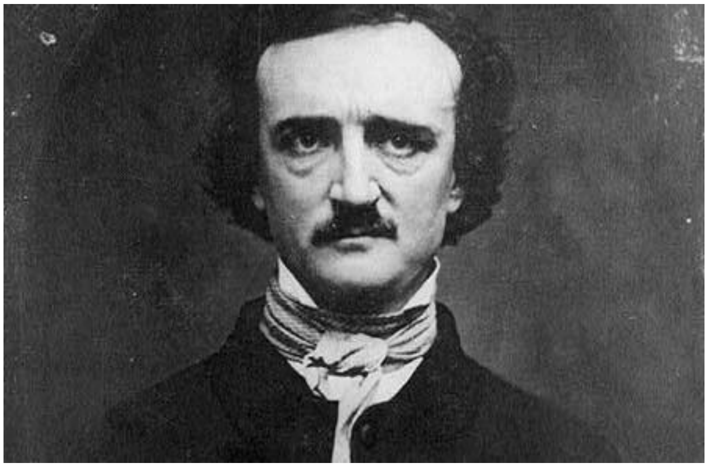
"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Edgar Allan Poe Biography

On January 19, 1809, Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Poe's father and mother, both professional actors, died before the poet was three years old, and John and Frances Allan raised him as a foster child in Richmond, Virginia. John Allan, a prosperous tobacco exporter, sent Poe to the best boarding schools and later to the University of Virginia, where Poe excelled academically. After less than one year of school, however, he was forced to leave the university when Allan refused to pay Poe's gambling debts.



Poe returned briefly to Richmond, but his relationship with Allan deteriorated. In 1827, he moved to Boston and enlisted in the United States Army. His first collection of poems, *Tamerlane, and Other Poems*, was published that year. In 1829, he published a second collection entitled *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems*. Neither volume received significant critical or public attention. Following his Army service, Poe was admitted to the United States Military Academy, but he was again forced to leave for lack of financial support. He then moved into the home of his aunt Maria Clemm and her daughter Virginia in Baltimore, Maryland.

Poe began to sell short stories to magazines at around this time, and, in 1835, he became the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond, where he moved with his aunt and cousin Virginia. In 1836, he married Virginia, who was fourteen years old at the time. Over the next ten years, Poe would edit a number of literary journals including the Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Graham's Magazine* in Philadelphia and the *Broadway Journal* in New York City. It was during these years that he established himself as a poet, a short story writer, and an editor. He published some of his best-known stories and poems, including "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Murders in the Rue

Morgue," and “The Raven.” After Virginia’s death from tuberculosis in 1847, Poe’s lifelong struggle with depression and alcoholism worsened. He returned briefly to Richmond in 1849 and then set out for an editing job in Philadelphia. For unknown reasons, he stopped in Baltimore. On October 3, 1849, he was found in a state of semi-consciousness. Poe died four days later of “acute congestion of the brain.” Evidence by medical practitioners who reopened the case has shown that Poe may have been suffering from rabies.

Poe’s work as an editor, a poet, and a critic had a profound impact on American and international literature. His stories mark him as one of the originators of both horror and detective fiction. Many anthologies credit him as the “architect” of the modern short story. He was also one of the first critics to focus primarily on the effect of style and structure in a literary work; as such, he has been seen as a forerunner to the “art for art’s sake” movement. French Symbolists such as Mallarmé and Rimbaud claimed him as a literary precursor. Baudelaire spent nearly fourteen years translating Poe into French. Today, Poe is remembered as one of the first American writers to become a major figure in world literature.

Other Poems

Because I could not stop for Death
by Emily Dickinson
Because I could not stop for Death
He kindly stopped for me
The Carriage held but just Ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the School, where Children strove
At recess in the ring
We passed the fields of gazing grain
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us
The dews drew quivering and chill
For only Gossamer, my gown
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the GROUND
The roof was scarcely visible
The cornice in the ground.

Since then 'tis centuries and yet
Feels shorter than the DAY
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, "I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!" and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

We Real Cool

By Gwendolyn Brooks

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

The Bean Eaters

By: Gwendolyn Brooks

They eat beans mostly, this old yellow pair.
Dinner is a casual affair.
Plain chipware on a plain and creaking wood,
Tin flatware.

Two who are Mostly Good.
Two who have lived their day,
But keep on putting on their clothes
And putting things away.

And remembering . . .
Remembering, with twinklings and twinges,
As they lean over the beans in their rented back room that
is full of beads and receipts and dolls and cloths,
tobacco crumbs, vases and fringes.

I’m Nobody. Who Are You?

By: Emily Dickinson

I’m Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there’s a pair of us!
Don’t tell! they’d advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one’s name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

I Hear America Singing

By: Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe
and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off
work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the
deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing
as he stands,
The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the
morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at
work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young
fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Do not go gentle into that good night

Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

My Country Tis Of Thee

By: Samuel Francis Smith

My country, tears of thee,
Sweet land of liberty
Of thee I see.
Land where my fathers die
Land of the pilgrims pray
From every mountain sight,
Let pray unweal.

Our father's guard to thee,
Author of liberty
To thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light
Protect us by thy mind,
Great God, our king.

Grand birds fly of our sons
Our authors and our fires
Keep we still pure.
Our starting fed us through
The hope of all the world
In peace and lie in pearl
God holds a cure.

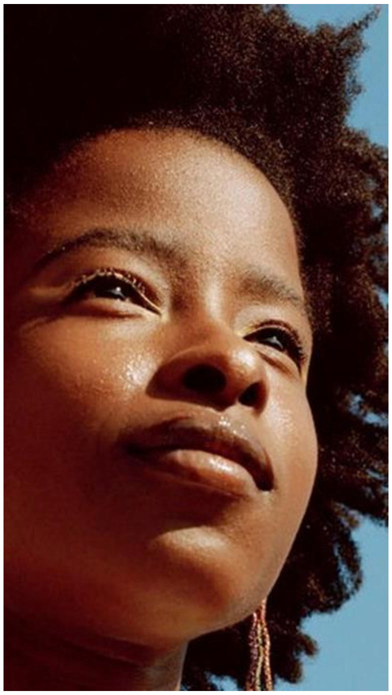
Amanda Gorman

Amanda S. C. Gorman (born 1998) is an American poet and activist. Her work focuses on issues of oppression, feminism, race, and marginalization, as well as the African diaspora. Gorman was the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate. She published the poetry book The One for Whom Food Is Not Enough in 2015. In 2021, she delivered her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden. Her inauguration poem generated international acclaim, and shortly thereafter, two of her books achieved best-seller status, and she obtained a professional management contract.

Gorman was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1998. She was raised by her single mother, Joan Wicks, a 6th-grade English teacher in Watts, with her two siblings. She has a twin sister, Gabrielle, who is an activist and filmmaker. Gorman has said she grew up in an environment with limited television access. She has described her young self as a "weird child" who enjoyed reading and writing and was encouraged by her mother.

Gorman has an auditory processing disorder and is hypersensitive to sound. She also had a speech impediment during childhood. Gorman participated in speech therapy during her childhood and Elida Kocharian of *The Harvard Crimson* wrote in 2018, "Gorman doesn't view her speech impediment as a crutch—rather, she sees it as a gift and a strength." Gorman told *The Harvard Gazette* in 2018, "I always saw it as a strength because since I was experiencing these obstacles in terms of my auditory and vocal skills, I became really good at reading and writing. I realized that at a young age when I was reciting the Marianne Deborah Williamson quote that 'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure' to my mom." In 2021, Gorman told *CBS This Morning* co-host Anthony Mason that she used songs as a form of speech therapy, and explained, "My favorite thing to practice was the song 'Aaron Burr, Sir,' from *Hamilton* because it is jam-packed with R's. And I said, 'if I can keep up with Leslie in this track, then I am on my way to being able to say this R in a poem."

Gorman attended New Roads, a private school in Santa Monica, for grades K–12. As a senior, she received a Milken Family Foundation college scholarship. She studied sociology at Harvard College, graduating *cum laude* in 2020 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa.



Gorman's art and activism focus on issues of oppression, feminism, race, and marginalization, as well as the African diaspora. She has said she was inspired to become a youth delegate for the United Nations in 2013 after watching a speech by Pakistani Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai. Gorman was chosen as the first youth poet laureate of Los Angeles in 2014. In 2014 it was reported that Gorman was "editing the first draft of a novel the 16-year-old has been writing over the last two years."[28] She published the poetry book *The One for Whom Food Is Not Enough* in 2015.

In 2016, Gorman founded the nonprofit organization One Pen One Page, a youth writing and leadership program. In 2017, she became the first author to be featured on XQ Institute's Book of the Month, a monthly giveaway to share inspiring Gen Z's favorite books. She wrote a tribute for black athletes for Nike and has a book deal with Viking Children's Books to write two children's picture books.

In 2017, Gorman became the first youth poet to open the literary season for the Library of Congress, and she has read her poetry on MTV. She wrote "In This Place: An American Lyric" for her September 2017 performance at the Library of Congress, which commemorated the inauguration of Tracy K. Smith as Poet Laureate of the United States. The Morgan Library and Museum acquired her poem "In This Place (An American Lyric)" and displayed it in 2018 near works by Elizabeth Bishop.

While at Harvard, Gorman became the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate in April 2017. She was chosen from five finalists. In 2017, Gorman won a $10,000 grant from media company *OZY* in the annual OZY Genius Awards through which 10 college students are given "the opportunity to pursue their outstanding ideas and envisioned innovations".

In 2017, Gorman said she intends to run for president in 2036, and she has subsequently often repeated this hope. On being selected as one of *Glamour* magazine's 2018 "College Women of the Year", she said: "Seeing the ways that I as a young black woman can inspire people is something I want to continue in politics. I don’t want to just speak works; I want to turn them into realities and actions." After she read her poem "The Hill We Climb" at President Joe Biden's inauguration in 2021, Hillary Clinton tweeted her support for Gorman's 2036 aspiration.

In 2019, Gorman was chosen as one of *The Root* magazine's "Young Futurists", an annual list of "the 25 best and brightest young African-Americans who excel in the fields of social justice and activism, arts and culture, enterprise and corporate innovation, science and technology, and green innovation".

In May 2020, Gorman appeared in an episode of the web series *Some Good News* hosted by John Krasinski, where she had the opportunity to virtually meet Oprah Winfrey and issued a virtual commencement speech to those who could not attend commencements due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.

In 2020, Gorman presented "Earthrise", a poem focused on the climate crisis.

Gorman read her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of Joe Biden on January 20, 2021, and is the youngest poet to read at a presidential inauguration in United States history. Jill Biden recommended her for the inauguration. After January 6, 2021, Gorman amended her poem's wording to address the storming of the United States Capitol. During the week before the inauguration, she told *Washington Post* book critic Ron Charles, "My hope is that my poem will represent a moment of unity for our country" and "with my words, I'll be able to speak to a new chapter and era for our nation."

Videos

Amanda Gorman reads her inaugural poem, “The Hill We Climb.”https://youtu.be/LZ055ilIiN4
Student Ted Talk: Using Your Voice Is A Political Choice: https://youtu.be/zaZBgqfEa1E
“Roar” https://youtu.be/PD2_uKaugPI
“The Miracle of Morning” https://youtu.be/XOieGJl6g4s
Dance Poetry Performance: https://youtu.be/2eJfmvAHUsk

The Hill We Climb by: Amanda Gorman

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade.
We've braved the belly of the beast,
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,
and the norms and notions
of what just is
isn't always just-ice.
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it.
Somehow we do it.
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken,
but simply unfinished.
We the successors of a country and a time
where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one.
And yes we are far from polished.
Far from pristine.
But that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect.
We are striving to forge a union with purpose,
to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man.
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us,
but what stands before us.
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside.
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another.
We seek harm to none and harmony for all.
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true,
that even as we grieved, we grew,
that even as we hurt, we hoped,
that even as we tired, we tried,
that we'll forever be tied together, victorious.
Not because we will never again know defeat,
but because we will never again sow division.
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree

and no one shall make them afraid.
If we're to live up to our own time,
then victory won't lie in the blade.
But in all the bridges we've made,
that is the promise to glade,
the hill we climb.
If only we dare.
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it.
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it.
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.
And this effort very nearly succeeded.
But while democracy can be periodically delayed,
it can never be permanently defeated.
In this truth,
in this faith we trust.
For while we have our eyes on the future,
history has its eyes on us.
This is the era of just redemption
we feared at its inception.
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter.
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert,
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was,
but move to what shall be.
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free.
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation,
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation.
Our blunders become their burdens.
But one thing is certain,
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy,
and change our children's birthright.

So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with.
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west.
We will rise from the windswept northeast,
where our forefathers first realized revolution.
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states.
We will rise from the sunbaked south.
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.
And every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful.
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid,
the new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.