

poet

Langston Hughes

1902-1967 , Joplin , MO

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.

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 cowrote 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.

TEXT taken from : <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/langston-hughes>

JUVENILE Literature by L. Hughes:

- (With Arna Bontemps) *Popo and Fifina: Children of Haiti*, Macmillan, 1932.
- *The First Book of Negroes*, F. Watts, 1952.
- *The First Book of Rhythms*, F. Watts, 1954, also published as *The Book of Rhythms*, Oxford University Press (New York, NY), 1995.
- *Famous American Negroes*, Dodd, 1954.
- *Famous Negro Music Makers*, Dodd, 1955.
- *The First Book of Jazz*, F. Watts, 1955, revised edition, 1976.
- *The First Book of the West Indies*, F. Watts, 1956 (published in England as *The First Book of the Caribbean*, E. Ward, 1965).
- *Famous Negro Heroes of America*, Dodd, 1958.
- *The First Book of Africa*, F. Watts, 1960, revised edition, 1964.
- *The Sweet and Sour Animal Book*, Oxford University Press (New York City), 1994. 12 | Page

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