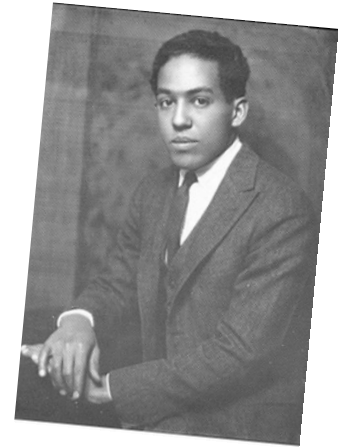


Literature as an Outgrowth of Story

Langston Hughes was an American poet who began writing collections of verse in the 1920's and 1930's. His poems deal with the trials and joys of the African American.

Read the poem by Langston Hughes.

- Write a two-chunk paragraph (TS:CD:CM:CM:CD:CM:CM:CS) explaining how Langston Hughes poetry relates to characters and/or themes presented in the book.
- You will need to quote two examples from the poem and explain the connection to the issues for the characters of the time.



The Negro Mother by Langston Hughes

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.
Look at my face -- dark as the night --
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea
Carrying in my body the seed of the free.
I am the woman who worked in the field
Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.
I am the one who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I
gave --
Children sold away from me, I'm husband
sold, too.
No safety , no love, no respect was I due.

Three hundred years in the deepest South:
But God put a song and a prayer in my
mouth .
God put a dream like steel in my soul.
Now, through my children, I'm reaching the
goal.

Now, through my children, young and free,
I realized the blessing deed to me.
I couldn't read then. I couldn't write.
I had nothing, back there in the night.
Sometimes, the valley was filled with tears,
But I kept trudging on through the lonely
years.
Sometimes, the road was hot with the sun,
But I had to keep on till my work was done:
I had to keep on! No stopping for me --

I was the seed of the coming Free.
I nourished the dream that nothing could
smother
Deep in my breast -- the Negro mother.
I had only hope then , but now through you,
Dark ones of today, my dreams must come
true:
All you dark children in the world out there,
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair.
Remember my years, heavy with sorrow --
And make of those years a torch for
tomorrow.
Make of my pass a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the
night.
Lift high my banner out of the dust.
Stand like free men supporting my trust.
Believe in the right, let none push you back.
Remember the whip and the slaver's track.
Remember how the strong in struggle and
strife
Still bar you the way, and deny you life --
But march ever forward, breaking down
bars.
Look ever upward at the sun and the stars.
Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and
my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs --
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro
Mother.