

高等院校英语专业系列教材 · 英文影印版

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文学基础教程

诗歌部分

[美] 芭芭拉·巴纳德 [美] 戴维·F·温 著

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PROFILE OF A POET— Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

**Langston Hughes was
an eloquent voice**

for justice on the American home front, and he was also a writer of international stature. He traveled to Africa, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Europe, seeking out other poets and new subjects for his own writing. During the Spanish Civil War, he was an outspoken ally of the Loyalist government in Spain and an articulate and resolute opponent of fascism. He traveled to Spain and came under fire in Madrid and bombardment in Barcelona, where he wrote about the war and the American volunteers—white and black—in the Lincoln and Washington battalions of the International Brigade. This experience caused him problems later in the 1940s, as you can see in his poem “Un-American Investigators.”

Un-American Investigators (1953)

The committee's fat,
 Smug, almost secure
 Co-religionists
 Shiver with delight
 In warm manure 5
 As those investigated—
 Too brave to name a name—
 Have pseudonyms revealed
 In Gentile game
 Of who, 10
 Born Jew,
 Is who?
Is not your name Lipshitz?
 Yes.
Did you not change it 15
For subversive purposes?
 No.
For nefarious gain?
 Not so.
Are you sure? 20
 The committee shivers
 With delight in
 Its manure.

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, in 1902, when segregation was institutionalized and public racism was a fact of life for African Americans. In its 1896 decision *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court had handed down a doctrine of "separate but equal" which gave state and local governments a free hand to marginalize blacks and deny them the basic rights guaranteed to American citizens. This law, which formed the underpinnings of segregation, was not overturned until *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

Hughes's family, with its mixed heritage of African, Native American, and white blood, was strongly connected to the Abolitionist movement (an ancestor had fought and died with John Brown at Harper's Ferry in 1859), which made Hughes intensely aware from his youngest days of the issues of race and the dilemma of being black in an overwhelmingly white and largely intolerant society.



Langston as a boy in Lawrence, Kansas