

AFRICAN AMERICAN POETRY

THE NEGRO MOTHER

- Langston Hughes.

About the poet : ([feb 1st, 1901](#) - [may 22nd, 1967](#))

Hughes was an [American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist](#) from Joplin, Missouri.

He was the earliest innovator of the new literary art form called [jazz poetry](#). First, he gained attention from 'The Crisis' magazine and, followed by book publishers and became known in Harlem community. He is also best known as a leader of the [Harlem Renaissance](#). During the Civil rights movement, he wrote a weekly column in a leading black newspaper, [The Chicago defender](#). He had won Undergraduate Poetry Prize, NAACP Spingarn medal, honorary doctorate by Howard University and much more.

About the poem:

This poem "The Negro Mother" though written by a male writer, its voice of narration is by a black mother. The mother here doesn't refer to a single person but, all the women's of black folk. The poem begins as a Negro mother is narrating into her child about the sufferings and sorrowful life of Negro people.

In order to convey the message how people were stolen from Africa as slaves for past three hundred years, the poet uses an allusion from the 'book of Exodus', old Testament. How the Hebrew people were taken as slaves and, how God

helped them to get free out of the sufferings. The phrase 'the seed of the free', refers to the Unborn child of the mother and their initial thought of fighting for freedom and equality. The narrator describes how the negroes suffered as slaves in the fields, how they were mistreated, beaten and so on.

They were even got separated from their own children and their husband and undergone lots of problems. Moreover being a woman was double marginalized and suffering was much more. They had no safety, no love and neither respect.

The Negro mother, also says that through pray God has given them a 'dream like steel' in reaching their destination equality.

The narrator asks the young generation to remember the sweat, pain, despair and sorrow which they had undergone and persuade them to fight for freedom and equality keeping all the sufferings as a road to their success.

Again and again the narrator ask them to remember the whip, slavery, struggle and strife they had undergone and ask them to move forward breaking down all the obstacles in their path.

The poet ends the poem as if the narrator promises that she will always stay with the young generation forever until they reach their destination 'no white brother dares to touch the children of a Negro mother'.

The Loss of Love

About Countee Cullen:

Countee Porter Cullen was born on May 30, 1903. From 1918 - 1921, Cullen attended DeWitt Clinton High School, where he edited the school newspaper and literary magazine and won a city-wide poetry competition. Then he went on to attend New York University, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1925 and won the Witter Bynnes Poetry Prize.

He graduated with a master's from Harvard University in 1926 and published his lauded debut volume of poetry, Color. With the publication of additional poetry volumes, Copper Sun and The Ballad of the Brown Girl, Cullen was seen as a leading light of the Harlem Renaissance.

The poet was a children's author and playwright as well, as seen in his theatrical work The Third Fourth of July. He died on January 9, 1946, from uremia and complications of high blood pressure.

About the Poem:

In this poem, he is writing to explain that he has lost his beloved and his life is full of misery without her. Go down before a wind of gloom. The first paragraph tells how the writer looks all throughout his house, hoping that by some miracle, he will find his lost love. When he lights the candles to see if she is in the room, but she finds that she is not in the room. Then he blows out the candles and is disappointed.

In the second paragraph shows that the writer misses his love so much. Then he finds himself writing her name and drawing his picture everywhere, even in the dust that collects in his house.

In the third paragraph, the writer complaining that his house is falling apart and the rent collectors keep knocking at his door and urged him to pay the rent for his damaged house.

In the fourth paragraph, he is saying that he is too depressed to even pick fruit to eat, and he just lets it grow until it is so ripe that it falls off of the trees and he only eats it then.

In the next paragraph, The character in the poem works on a farm, and since he has been so depressed about losing his love, milking the cows seems very hard and he is amazed that he is still alive and doing this.

Finally in the last paragraph, he is saying that since he is in such a state of misery, he has no mind to cry or even write poetry. He says that he'd rather die than go through the horrible pain that he is experiencing with his "loss of love".