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Carl Sandburg
and Langston Hughes:
Workingman's Poets



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"Sandburg composed his poetry primarily in free verse. Concerning rhyme versus non-rhyme Sandburg once said airily: "If it jells into free verse, all right. If it jells into rhyme, all right." Some critics noted that the illusion of poetry in his works was based more on the arrangement of the lines than on the lines themselves. Sandburg, aware of the criticism, wrote in the preface to *Complete Poems*: "There is a formal poetry only in form, all dressed up and nowhere to go. The number of syllables, the designated and required stresses of accent, the rhymes if wanted—they all come off with the skill of a solved crossword puzzle.... The fact is ironic. A proficient and sometimes exquisite performer in rhymed verse goes out of his way to register the point that the more rhyme there is in poetry the more danger of its tricking the writer into something other than the urge in the beginning." ...In *Good Morning, America*, he published thirty-eight definitions of poetry..."

"Carl Sandburg." Poetry Foundation. Poetry Foundation. Web. 21 Mar. 2016.

38 DEFINITIONS OF POETRY by Carl Sandburg

1. Poetry is a projection across silence of cadences arranged to break that silence with definite intentions of echoes, syllables, wave lengths.
2. Poetry is an art practiced with the terribly plastic material of human language.
3. Poetry is the report of a nuance between two moments, when people say, 'Listen!' and 'Did you see it?' 'Did you hear it? What was it?'
4. Poetry is the tracing of the trajectories of a finite sound to the infinite points of its echoes.
5. Poetry is a sequence of dots and dashes, spelling depths, crypts, cross-lights, and moon wisps.
6. Poetry is a puppet-show, where riders of skyrockets and divers of sea fathoms gossip about the sixth sense and the fourth dimension.
7. Poetry is a plan for a slit in the face of a bronze fountain goat and the path of fresh drinking water.
8. Poetry is a slipknot tightened around a time-beat of one thought, two thoughts, and a last interweaving thought there is not yet a number for.
9. Poetry is an echo asking a shadow dancer to be a partner.
10. Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly the air.
11. Poetry is a series of explanations of life, fading off into horizons too swift for explanations.
12. Poetry is a fossil rock-print of a fin and a wing, with an illegible oath between.
13. Poetry is an exhibit of one pendulum connecting with other and unseen pendulums inside and outside the one seen.
14. Poetry is a sky dark with a wild-duck migration.
15. Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable.
16. Poetry is any page from a sketchbook of outlines of a doorknob with thumb-prints of dust, blood, dreams.
17. Poetry is a type-font design for an alphabet of fun, hate, love, death.
18. Poetry is the cipher key to the five mystic wishes packed in a hollow silver bullet fed to a flying fish.
19. Poetry is a theorem of a yellow-silk handkerchief knotted with riddles, sealed in a balloon tied to the tail of a kite flying in a white wind against a blue sky in spring.
20. Poetry is a dance music measuring buck-and-wing follies along with the gravest and stateliest dead-marches.
21. Poetry is a sliver of the moon lost in the belly of a golden frog.
22. Poetry is a mock of a cry at finding a million dollars and a mock of a laugh at losing it.
23. Poetry is the silence and speech between a wet struggling root of a flower and a sunlit blossom of that flower.
24. Poetry is the harnessing of the paradox of earth cradling life and then entombing it.
25. Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.
26. Poetry is a fresh morning spider-web telling a story of moonlit hours of weaving and waiting during a night.

27. Poetry is a statement of a series of equations, with numbers and symbols changing like the changes of mirrors, pools, skies, the only never-changing sign being the sign of infinity.
28. Poetry is a packsack of invisible keepsakes.
29. Poetry is a section of river-fog and moving boat-lights, delivered between bridges and whistles, so one says, 'Oh!' and another, 'How?'
30. Poetry is a kinetic arrangement of static syllables.
31. Poetry is the arithmetic of the easiest way and the primrose path, matched up with foam-flanked horses, bloody knuckles, and bones, on the hard ways to the stars.
32. Poetry is a shuffling of boxes of illusions buckled with a strap of facts.
33. Poetry is an enumeration of birds, bees, babies, butterflies, bugs, bambinos, babayagas, and bipeds, beating their way up bewildering bastions.
34. Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away.
35. Poetry is the establishment of a metaphorical link between white butterfly-wings and the scraps of torn-up love-letters.
36. Poetry is the achievement of the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits.
37. Poetry is a mystic, sensuous mathematics of fire, smoke-stacks, waffles, pansies, people, and purple sunsets.
38. Poetry is the capture of a picture, a song, or a flair, in a deliberate prism of words.

"Numbers are the essential building blocks of mathematics, the essential tool of arithmetic, as described by Carl Sandburg" Birken, Marcia, and Anne C. Coon. *Discovering Patterns in Mathematics and Poetry*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008. Web.

1. How do you think the speaker feels about Arithmetic? Use quotations from the poem to prove your point.
2. The rhythm of a poem is often created by repetition of words or phrases. Find words that are repeated and explain why you think they were repeated.
3. Circle the alliterations in the poem and explain how they are used.
4. How does the quotation by Birken and Coon help to explain the poem?

Arithmetic

Arithmetic is where numbers fly like pigeons in and out of your head.

Arithmetic tells you how many you lose or win if you know how many you had before you lost or won.

Arithmetic is seven eleven all good children go to heaven -- or five six bundle of sticks.

Arithmetic is numbers you squeeze from your head to your hand to your pencil to your paper till you get the answer.

Arithmetic is where the answer is right and everything is nice and you can look out of the window and see the blue sky -- or the answer is wrong and you have to start all over and try again and see how it comes out this time.

If you take a number and double it and double it again and then double it a few more times, the number gets bigger and bigger and goes higher and higher and only arithmetic can tell you what the number is when you decide to quit doubling.

Arithmetic is where you have to multiply -- and you carry the multiplication table in your head and hope you won't lose it.

If you have two animal crackers, one good and one bad, and you eat one and a striped zebra with streaks all over him eats the other, how many animal crackers will you have if somebody offers you five six seven and you say No no no and you say Nay nay nay and you say Nix nix nix?

If you ask your mother for one fried egg for breakfast and she gives you two fried eggs and you eat both of them, who is better in arithmetic, you or your mother?

Literal Meaning	Doors	Figurative Meaning
	An open door says, "Come in." A shut door says, "Who are you?" Shadows and ghosts go through shut doors. If a door is shut and you want it shut, why open it? If a door is open and you want it open, why shut it? Doors forget but only doors know what it is doors forget.	

In "Jazz Fantasia," Carl Sandburg uses several literary techniques, including alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance, to evoke sound imagery. These techniques not only reinforce the central idea of the poem (appreciating the wide range of emotions and sounds of jazz music) but also add a musical quality to the poem's language. The overall effect mimics a spontaneous musical composition, or fantasia.

Jazz Fantasia

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos,
Sob on the long cool winding saxophones.
Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans,
Let your trombones ooze,
And go hushahusha-hush with the slippery sand-paper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome tree-tops,
Moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible,
Cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle cop,
Bang-bang! you jazzmen,
Bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns, tin cans-
Make two people fight on the top of a stairway
And scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

Can the rough stuff ...
Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes up the night river
With a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo ...
And the green lanterns calling to the high soft stars ...
A red moon rides on the humps of the low river hills ...
Go to it, O jazzmen.

Jazz Fantasia (Choral Reading)

1. - Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos,
2. - Sob on the long cool winding saxophones.
- All - Go to it, O jazzmen.

3. - Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans,
4. - Let your trombones ooze,
5. - And go hushahusha-hush with the slippery sand-paper.

6. - Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome tree-tops,
7. - Moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible,
8. - Cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle cop,
- All -Bang-bang! you jazzmen,
9. - Bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns, tin cans-
- 10.-Make two people fight on the top of a stairway
And scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

- 11.-Can the rough stuff ...
- 12.-Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes up the night river
With a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo ...
- 13.-And the green lanterns calling to the high soft stars ...
A red moon rides on the humps of the low river hills ...
- All-Go to it, O jazzmen.

Choose one of the Carl Sandburg poems listed below. In your small group interpret, choreograph and act out one of the poems. Try to convey the meaning and tone of the poem to your audience. Think about literal, figurative, and connotative meanings of the words and/or phrases used in the text.

Stumbling

Stumbling is where you walk and find you are not walking
Stumbling is where you find yourself spread on the ground, instead of
standing on your feet
Stumbling is where your feet try to make a fool of you
Stumbling is to go where you are not looking when you mean to go
where you are looking
Stumbling is to get your feet mixed so you go down
Stumblers are two kinds, those who come up quick and those who say,
"Where am I?"
If you never want to stumble, be a fish or a bird.

MANNERS

Manners is how to behave
Manners is when you know how to eat without being bashful
Manners is not afraid of what you are wearing
Manners is like a man tips his hat when he meets a lady
Manners is "EXUSE ME" OR "I BEG YOUR PARDON" instead
of...
"HOW DO YOU GET THERE?" OR "I'LL KNOCK YOUR
BLOCK OFF."

PRIMER LESSON

Look out how you use proud words.
When you let proud words go, it is
Not easy to call them back.
They wear long boots, hard boots; they
walk off proud; they can't hear you
calling—
Look out how you use proud words.

BRAINWASHING

Repeat and repeat till they say what you
are saying.
Repeat and repeat till they are helpless
before your repetitions.
Say it over and over till their brains can
hold only what you are saying.
Speak it soft, yell it and yell it, change
to a whisper, always in repeats.
Come back to it day on day, hour after hour,
till they say what you tell them to say.
To wash A B C out of a brain and replace it
with X Y Z—this is it.

BOXES AND BAGS

The bigger the box the more it holds.
Empty boxes hold the same as empty heads.
Enough small empty boxes thrown into a big empty box fill it full.
A half-empty box says, "Put more in."
A big enough box could hold the world.
Elephants need big boxes to hold a dozen elephant handkerchiefs.
Fleas fold little handkerchiefs and fix them nice and neat in flea
handkerchief boxes.
Bags lean against each other and boxes stand independent.
Boxes are square with corners unless round with circles.
Box can be piled on box till the whole works comes tumbling.
Pile box on box and the bottom box says, "If you will kindly take notice you
will see it all rests on me."
Pile box on box and the top says, "Who falls farthest if or when we fall? I ask
you."
Box people go looking for boxes and bag people go looking for bags.

We Must Be Polite

(Lessons for children on how to behave under peculiar circumstances)

1

If we meet a gorilla
what shall we do?
Two things we may do
if we so wish to do.

Speak to the gorilla,
very, very respectfully,
"How do you do, sir?"

Or, speak to him with less
distinction of manner,
"Hey, why don't you go back
where you came from?"

2

If an elephant knocks on your door
and asks for something to eat,
there are two things to say:
Tell him there are nothing but cold
victuals in the house and he will do
better next door.

Or say: We have nothing but six bushels
of potatoes—will that be enough for
your breakfast, sir?

<p>Grass</p> <p>Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo. Shovel them under and let me work— I am the grass; I cover all.</p> <p>And pile them high at Gettysburg And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun. Shovel them under and let me work. Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor: What place is this? Where are we now?</p> <p>I am the grass. Let me work.</p>	<p>What is the dominate figure of speech in the poem? Why is it effective?</p> <p>Why does Nature appear frustrated?</p> <p>Why do people seemed to forget the past so quickly? Does that cause us to repeat our tragic errors?</p> <p>What is the “work” of grass?</p>
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Austerlitz: Major battle of the Napoleonic wars, fought on December 2, 1805. Nearly 25,000 men died. Napoleon Bonaparte and his army of nearly 70,000 soldiers defeated a force of Russians and Austrians numbering about 90,000. Austerlitz is in the present-day Czech Republic.

Waterloo: The final battle of the Napoleonic wars, fought near Waterloo, Belgium, on June 18, 1815, and resulting in more than 60,000 casualties. British forces under the Duke of Wellington, General Arthur Wellesley, and Prussian forces under Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher combined to defeat Napoleon.

Gettysburg: Major battle of the U.S. Civil War in which Union forces of General George G. Meade defeated Confederate forces under General Robert E. Lee near the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on July 1-3, 1863, resulting in 45,000 to 50,000 casualties. The battle turned the tide of the war in favor of the Union.

Ypres: (pronounced E pruh): Town in Belgium that was the site of three major World War I battles (October-November 1914, April-May 1915, and July-November 1917) that resulted in more than 850,000 German and allied casualties.

Verdun: Indecisive World War I battle between the French and the Germans fought at Verdun, France, from February to December, 1916. Total casualties numbered more than 700,000.

(*Polonius's Advice to Laertes* from *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and *A Father To His Son* by Carl Sandburg) The following two poems are examples of fatherly advice given to a son. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two poems, analyzing how each poet uses literary devices to make his point.

Polonius's Advice to Laertes
(excerpted from *Hamlet*, Act I, scene iii)
William Shakespeare

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There - my blessing with thee,
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy,
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!

A Father To His Son – Carl Sandburg

A father sees his son nearing manhood.
What shall he tell that son?

'Life is hard; be steel; be a rock.'

And this might stand him for the storms
and serve him for humdrum monotony
and guide him among sudden betrayals
and tighten him for slack moments.

'Life is a soft loam; be gentle; go easy.'

And this too might serve him.

Brutes have been gentled where lashes failed.

The growth of a frail flower in a path up
has sometimes shattered and split a rock.

A tough will counts. So does desire.

So does a rich soft wanting.

Without rich wanting nothing arrives.

Tell him too much money has killed men
and left them dead years before burial:
the quest of lucre beyond a few easy needs
has twisted good enough men
sometimes into dry thwarted worms.

Tell him time as a stuff can be wasted.

Tell him to be a fool every so often
and to have no shame over having been a fool
yet learning something out of every folly
hoping to repeat none of the cheap follies
thus arriving at intimate understanding
of a world numbering many fools.

Tell him to be alone often and get at himself
and above all tell himself no lies about himself
whatever the white lies and protective fronts
he may use against other people.

Tell him solitude is creative if he is strong
and the final decisions are made in silent rooms.

Tell him to be different from other people
if it comes natural and easy being different.

Let him have lazy days seeking his deeper motives.

Let him seek deep for where he is born natural.

Then he may understand Shakespeare
and the Wright brothers, Pasteur, Pavlov,

Michael Faraday and free imaginations

Bringing changes into a world resenting change.

He will be lonely enough

to have time for the work

he knows as his own.

When Sandburg turned 19, he left home to explore the American West, becoming one of the many hoboes who hopped freight trains in order to travel free. Sandburg was not only a poet but also a noted collector and performer of American folk music. His anthology, **American Songbag**, contains words and music to 290 songs that people have sung in the making of Americana. Even though this is not a poem by Sandburg, thought this was a fun way to end this collection of Sandburg materials. It fits him.

Hallelujah, I'm a Bum

Sandburg: "This old song heard at the water tanks of railroads in Kansas in 1897 and from harvest hands who worked in the wheat fields of Pawnee County, was picked up later by the I.W. W.'s, who made verses of their own for it, and gave it a wide fame. The migratory workers are familiar with the Salvation Army missions, and have adopted the Army custom of occasionally abandoning all polite formalities and striking deep into the common things and ways for their music and words. A "handout" is food handed out from a back door as distinguished from a "a sit down" which means an entrance into a house and a chair at a table."

Lyrics:

1. Oh, why don't you work
Like other men do?
How the hell can I work
When there's no work to do?
Hallelujah, I'm a bum,
Hallelujah, bum again,
Hallelujah, give us a handout,
To revive us again!
2. Oh, I love my boss
And my boss loves me,
And that is the reason
I'm so hungry,
Hallelujah, etc.
3. Oh, the springtime has come
And I'm just out of jail,
Without any money,
Without any bail.
Hallelujah, etc.
4. I went to a house,
And I knocked on the door;
A lady came out, says,
"You been here before."
Hallelujah, etc.
5. I went to a house,
And I asked for a piece of bread;
A lady came out, says,
"The baker is dead."
Hallelujah, etc.
6. When springtime does come,
O won't we have fun,
We'll throw up our jobs
And we'll go on the bum.
Hallelujah, etc.

"One of his [Langston Hughes] high school poems was about Sandburg, whom he referred to as his 'guiding light.' At age fifteen, Hughes wrote:"

Carl Sandburg's poems
Fall on the white pages of his books
Like blood-clots of song
From the wounds of humanity.
I know a lover of life sings.
I know a lover of all the living
Sings then.

Berry, Faith. *Langston Hughes, before and beyond Harlem*. New York, Wings Books, 1995.

<i>Mother to Son</i>	My Notes
<p>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've 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've still goin', honey, I've still climbin', And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.</p>	<p>What is the effect of the use of the extended metaphor? To what Biblical imagery is Hughes alluding?</p> <p>Why the use of colloquial language? What does it suggest about the speaker?</p>
<p><i>Hold fast to dreams</i></p> <p>Hold fast to dreams For if dreams die Life is a broken-winged bird That cannot fly.</p> <p>Hold fast to dreams For when dreams go Life is a barren field Frozen with snow</p>	<p>Once again, note the use of metaphor in this poem. How do the two metaphors add strength to the main idea? Why the use of repetition in the poem?</p>

Theme for English B
by Langston Hughes (1949)

The instructor said,

*Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you--
5 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.
10 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
15 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.
20 (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.
25 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
30 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.
35 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--
40 and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

Theme for English B Discussion Questions

How do we represent ourselves? What becomes important for others to know? The speaker in “Theme for English B” asks if the color of his skin affects his writing. This poem raises race questions – and questions of location and personal freedom – and resolves them in its own way. It also raises the question of what one’s true self is.

1. What do you notice about the structure of the poem? What marks its beginning, middle, and end? Note the shifts in the poem: what do they reveal?
2. What is the focus/main idea of each stanza? Are some parts developed in more detail than others? Why?
3. What do you notice about the style of this poem? How does Hughes “play” with rhythm and rhyme, and how do they affect the poem?
4. Does Hughes make unique word choices (diction) to characterize the speaker? Why? What literary techniques are present in the poem, and how do they add meaning?
5. What do you think is the intent of the poem? Describe the author’s tone, providing specific examples to support your opinion.
6. What is the narrator struggling with in the poem? How do you know?
7. Does the speaker define himself? How? In what terms does he state his identity (i.e., how does he answer the question “who am I”)?
8. How does society identify the narrator?

<i>Problems</i>	My Notes
2 and 2 are 4. 4 and 4 are 8. But what would happen If the last 4 was late? And how would it be If one 2 was me? Or if the first 4 was you Divided by 2?	

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

R. Baxter Miller

The double identification with penetrative time and receptive timelessness appears perhaps most notably in "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (*Crisis*, June 1921), a poem dedicated to the late W. E. B. Du Bois. "Rivers" presents the narrator's skill in retracing known civilization back to the source in East Africa. Within thirteen lines and five stanzas, through the suggestion of wisdom by anagoge, we re-project ourselves into aboriginal consciousness. Then the speaker affirms the spirit distilled from human history, ranging from 3000 B.C. through the mid-nineteenth century to the author himself at the brink of the Harlem Renaissance. The powerful repeat "I've known rivers. / Ancient, dusky rivers" closes the human narrative in nearly a circle, for the verse has turned itself subtly from an external focus to a unified and internal one: "My soul has grown deep like the rivers." Except for the physical and spiritual dimensions, the subjective "I" and the "river" read the same.

When the Euphrates flows from eastern Turkey southeast and southwest into the Tigris, it recalls the rise as well as the fall of the Roman Empire. For over two thousand years the water helped delimit that domain. Less so did the Congo, which south of the Sahara demarcates the natural boundaries between white and Black Africa. The latter empties into the Atlantic ocean; the Nile flows northward from Uganda into the Mediterranean; in the United States the Mississippi River flows southeast from north central Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Whether north or south, east or west, "River" signifies the fertility as well as the dissemination of life in concentric half-circles. The liquid, as the externalized form of the contemplative imagination, has both depth and flow. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" reclaims the origins in Africa of both physical and spiritual humanity.

From The Art and Language of Langston Hughes . Copyright © 1989 by The University Press of Kentucky
"On "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"." On "The Negro Speaks of Rivers",
www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/hughes/rivers.htm. Accessed 29 Mar. 2017.

<p><i>Dream Variations</i></p> <p>To fling my arms wide In some place of the sun, To whirl and to dance Till the white day is done. Then rest at cool evening Beneath a tall tree While night comes on gently, Dark like me — That is my dream!</p> <p>To fling my arms wide In the face of the sun, Dance! Whirl! Whirl! Till the quick day is done. Rest at pale evening . . . A tall, slim tree . . . Night coming tenderly Black like me.</p>	<p>My Notes</p>
<p><i>Lincoln Monument: Washington</i></p> <p>Let's go see Old Abe Sitting in the marble and the moonlight, Sitting lonely in the marble and the moonlight, Quiet for ten thousand centuries, old Abe. Quiet for a million, million years.</p> <p>Quiet-</p> <p>And yet a voice forever Against the Timeless walls Of time- Old Abe.</p>	<p>My Notes</p>

<i>The Weary Blues</i> <i>Langston Hughes, 1902 - 1967</i>	My Notes
<p>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."</p> <p>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."</p> <p>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.</p> <p>From <i>The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes</i>, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright © 1994 the Estate of Langston Hughes.</p>	