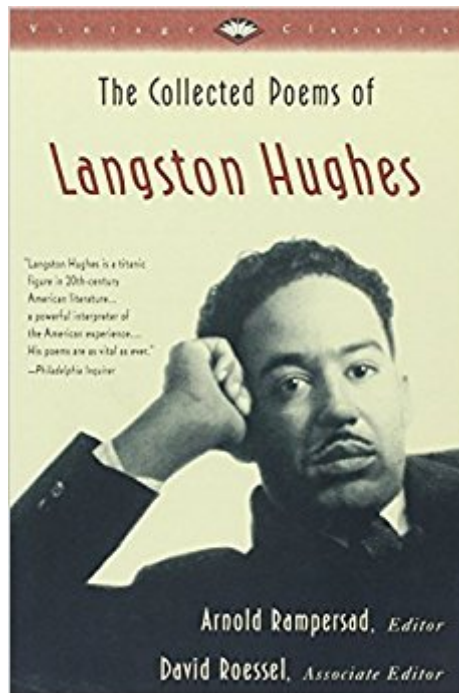




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# **The Collected Poems Of Langston Hughes (Vintage Classics)**



## Synopsis

"The ultimate book for both the dabbler and serious scholar--. [Hughes] is sumptuous and sharp, playful and sparse, grounded in an earthy music--. This book is a glorious revelation."--Boston Globe  
Spanning five decades and comprising 868 poems (nearly 300 of which have never before appeared in book form), this magnificent volume is the definitive sampling of a writer who has been called the poet laureate of African America--and perhaps our greatest popular poet since Walt Whitman. Here, for the first time, are all the poems that Langston Hughes published during his lifetime, arranged in the general order in which he wrote them and annotated by Arnold Rampersad and David Roessel. Alongside such famous works as "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" and Montage of a Dream Deferred, The Collected Poems includes the author's lesser-known verse for children; topical poems distributed through the Associated Negro Press; and poems such as "Goodbye Christ" that were once suppressed. Lyrical and pungent, passionate and polemical, the result is a treasure of a book, the essential collection of a poet whose words have entered our common language.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Despite his considerable output of poetry, short stories and autobiographical work, this is Langston Hughes' only novel. It is the tremendously crafted story of Sandy, a black child of the 1920s in rural Kansas. In poignant tightly written chapters, Hughes' depicts various events in Sandy's life often slipping into the perspective of those closest to him. Sandy lives most his life with his strong-willed

and deeply religious grandmother Aunt Hager. She is a benevolent woman who desires peaceful racial relations despite the overwhelming amount of racism and discrimination professed by both white and black community members. Sandy's mother Annjee is a loving and hard working woman eternally devoted to her husband Jimboy who is a good hearted man constantly on the move. Sandy's aunt Tempy is a well-off woman trying to immerse herself in white society and denigrating her own race in the process. His other aunt Harriett is a wilful woman who turns from the church for a different kind of existence. Through these expertly drawn characters, Sandy views their examples and he must make the choices that will effect his future. The novel is a tremendous chronicle of the struggle of a family to survive financially. It gives accounts of the psychological dilemma created by growing in a racially divided society and the diffuse joy in life that can be found even in troubling circumstances. Maya Angelou wrote of *Not Without Laughter*: "This book was written when preachers had to be poets and poets were preachers, because they needed to be available to all the people all the time." The messages this novel gives are not subtle. But, through its varied perspectives and eloquently written prose, it envelops the issues it preaches with emotionally edifying ideas.

For those who like and admire the poetic works of Langston Hughes, this is the book to purchase. This book collects all the "known" and "published" poems written by Hughes within his lifetime and at the different stages in his life. You have the so-called "race" poems that celebrate the dignity and beauty of black Americans, you have the poems of social protest such as those written during the 1930's that deal with inequality and injustice common to all regardless of race, the poems meant for children, and you even have the trite subject matter about love lost and found and springtime, nearly all written in the style of jazz and the blues that Hughes loved so much. Congrates must go to Arnold Rampersad and David Rossel for the effort in gathering these poems in their most current rendition as Hughes last wrote them. An effort was made by the editors to put the poems in the order they were written and published. A number of the poems were meant to be accompanied by jazz and blues music or read aloud in a specific way to drive home the point of the piece. At first glance, all the poems collected in this book appear simple and straight foreward. But, Hughes was skilled at putting a lot of meaning into just a few lines of his work. An example are the poems "Cross" and "Mulatto" which tell how the mixed bloodlines of every decendent of the pure blooded African slave and European came to exist today in modern black America and how prejudice denied them the right to claim all their heritages (political correct stereotypes, labels, are doing the same today!!!). My favorite of the poems here is "Dream Variation." Carl Van Vetchen truncated some of

the poem in his introduction to the the WEARY BLUES, the first book by Hughes.

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