



Langston Hughes

February 1, 1902 - May 22, 1967

Died: New York, New York

Interment: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Harlem, New York

Langston Hughes died at the Polyclinic Hospital in New York on May 22, 1967, after surgery for prostate cancer. He was sixty-five. Born in Joplin, Missouri, on February 1, 1902, he grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, and a string of Midwestern rooms, wrote "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" on a train to Mexico at eighteen, and made Harlem the address the world filed him under.

He worked as a seaman, a busboy, and a newspaper columnist. The Weary Blues, in 1926, put jazz on the page without cleaning the grammar. Simple, the character he invented for the Chicago Defender, said in bar English what editorials would not. He wrote poems, plays, an autobiography, children's books, and librettos, and he kept a Harlem townhouse that was part boarding house, part office, part refuge for younger writers who needed a meal and a no. McCarthy's people called him in; he testified with care and did not name names he could avoid. He left the Harlem house to the next writers the way some men leave a watch: with instructions to keep it working.

He never married. He traveled the Soviet Union, Spain, and the South, and he stayed interested in jazz long after the fashion moved on. The last illness was quiet. Friends read poems at the funeral at the Renaissance in Harlem.

There is no cemetery plot. His ashes are beneath the foyer of the Schomburg Center on Malcolm X Boulevard, under a cosmogram that quotes the river poem. Joplin was the birth. Harlem is the resting place.

Services

Died in New York on May 22, 1967. Funeral in Harlem. Ashes beneath the foyer of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

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