

# Harlem Renaissance Literature

The Harlem Renaissance was the blossoming of African American intellectual life during the 1920s and 1930s. It was centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. In addition to great music and art, many African-American writers found great success during this period.

## Langston Hughes

Poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist. He was one of the earliest innovators of the new literary art form “jazz poetry” and is also best known for what he wrote about the Harlem Renaissance, “Harlem was in vogue.”

His most famous works include *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, *Not Without Laughter*, and “I, Too.”

## Zora Neale Hurston

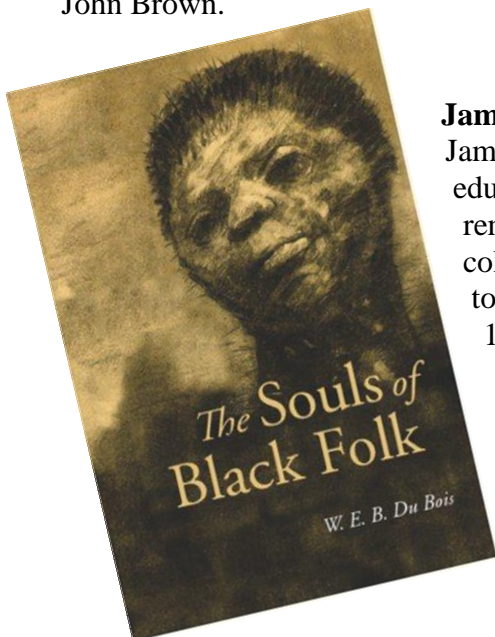
Zora Neale Hurston was an American folklorist and author during the Harlem Renaissance. Of Hurston's four novels and more than 50 published short stories, plays, and essays, she is best known for her 1937 novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

## Claude McKay

Claude McKay was a Jamaican writer and poet who wrote three novels: *Home to Harlem*, a best-seller which won the Harmon Gold Award for Literature, *Banjo*, and *Banana Bottom*. His book of poetry, *Harlem Shadows* was among the first books published during the Harlem Renaissance in 1922.

## W. E. B. Du Bois

An American civil rights activist, sociologist, historian, author, and editor. In the course of his long, turbulent career, W. E. B. Du Bois attempted virtually every possible solution to the problem of twentieth-century racism— scholarship, propaganda, integration, national self-determination, human rights, cultural and economic separatism, politics, international communism, expatriation, third world solidarity. His most famous works include *The Souls of Black Folk*, *The Philadelphia Negro*, and a biography of abolitionist John Brown.



## James Weldon Johnson

James Weldon Johnson was an American author, politician, journalist, poet, educator, lawyer, songwriter, and early civil rights activist. Johnson is remembered best for his writing, which includes novels, poems, and collections of folklore. One of the works for which he is best remembered today, *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*, was published in 1927 and celebrates the tradition of the folk preacher. He was also one of the first African-American professors at New York University. Later in life he was a professor of creative literature and writing at Fisk University.

