

Lesson #4: *Laughs* Poetry Activity

~ created by Dara Perales, MiraCosta College

1. Re-read the poem.
2. What, stylistically, is Hughes doing in the poem?
3. What is the overall tone of the poem?
4. What are some of the themes at work in the poem?
5. What is Hughes arguing through the poem?
6. From what perspective is the poem written?

Considering *The Distance Between Us*, develop the following:

1. List some of the important characters in the book.
2. Because you will re-write *Laughs* from the perspective of one of the characters in *Across a Hundred Mountains*, discuss whose perspective you think is the most important/interesting/developed/disturbing, etc...
3. Discuss the type of tone you would like your poem to have.
4. Using a similar style to Hughes', create a poem from the perspective of your chosen character.
5. Be prepared to explain why you created it the way you have.

Laughs by Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Dream-singers,
Story-tellers,
Dancers,
Loud laughs in the hands of Fate—
My people.
Dish-washers,
Elevator-boys,
Ladies' maids,
Crap-shooters,
Cooks,
Waiters,
Jazzers,
Nurses of babies,
Loaders of ships,
Rounders,
Number writers,
Comedians in vaudeville
And band-men in circuses—
Dream-singers all, --
My people.
Story-tellers, all,--
My people.
Dancers—
God! What dancers!
Singers—
God! What singers!
Singers and dancers
Dancers and laughs.
Laughs?
Yes, laughs...laughs...laughs—
Loud-mouth laughs in the hands
Of fate.