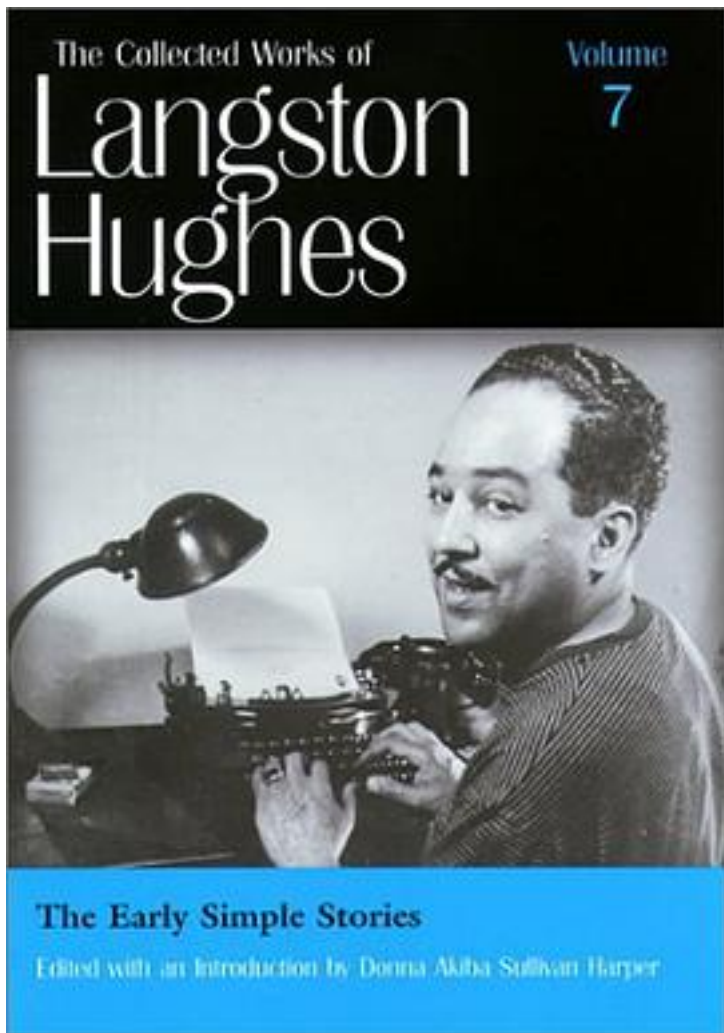


The Collected Works of Langston Hughes



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Jesse B. Semple first sprang to life in Langston Hughes's weekly Chicago Defender

column in 1943. Almost immediately, the "Simple stories", as they were routinely called, had a large and ever-increasing audience. Simple soon became Harlem's Everyman -- an ordinary black workingman, representative of the masses of black folks in the 1940s. Simple had migrated to Harlem, like many other blacks, seeking to escape the racism of the South, and he celebrated his new freedoms despite the economic struggles he still confronted. Simple's bar buddy and foil in the stories is the better-educated, more articulate Boyd who has never lived in the South. Their conversations permit Simple to speak the wisdom of the working class. By the time the first book of Simple stories was published, Hughes had honed and polished these two characters, enhancing the distinctions between the vernacular language of Simple and the more educated diction of his friend. Remaining within the Afrocentric world that was his chosen sphere, Hughes makes clear the message that Simple and Boyd are very much alike; both are black men in a racially unbalanced society. Both exist in a world within a world, in Harlem, the separate black community of New York City. Countless exchanges between Simple and his companion offer wit and wisdom that remind contemporary readers why Langston Hughes is so special.

作者介绍:

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