The Worlds of Langston Hughes

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CHRONOLOGY OF TRAVELS, TRANSLATIONS, AND OTHER KEY PUBLICATIONS

1902  James Langston Hughes born in Joplin, Missouri (February 1).

1903  Moves to his grandmother’s home in Lawrence, Kansas. Parents separate, and James Nathaniel Hughes emigrates to Mexico.

1908–9  Starts school in Topeka, Kansas, where he lives with his mother, Carrie Mercer Langston Hughes, and then is returned to his grandmother’s in Lawrence.

1915  Stays with the Reeds in Lawrence after his grandmother’s death, then joins his mother and her second husband in Lincoln, Illinois.

1916  The family moves first to Cleveland, Ohio, where Langston begins high school, then to Chicago. Langston remains in Cleveland.

1919  Spends the summer with his father in Toluca, Mexico.

1920  After graduating from Central High in Cleveland, Langston returns to Toluca to live with his father. Spends weekends in Mexico City. Teaches at Luis Tovar’s business institute near the end of his year-long stay. Sails from Veracruz back to New York City.

1921–22  “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” appears in The Crisis. Enrolls at Columbia University, only to withdraw after a term. Breaks with his father as a result. Moves to Harlem and works odd jobs.

1923–25  Signs on to the Africa-bound freighter West Hesseltine in June 1923. Visits Accra, the Azores, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Lagos, the Belgian Congo, Guinea-Bissau, French Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Angola. Sails to Europe on another freighter, the McKeesport, in December and again in February 1924. Visits
Rotterdam and stays in Paris until August, traveling to northern Italy, finally returning to the USA via Genoa on the West Cawthon. Arrives back in Manhattan in early November 1924.


1927  Publishes Fine Clothes to the Jew. Meets Charlotte Mason Osgood, who becomes his patron. Travels through the South of the USA with Zora Neale Hurston. First brief visit to Havana.

1928  Fernández de Castro publishes his first Hughes translation in Social.

1929  Graduates from Lincoln University.

1930  Publishes Not Without Laughter. Second visit to Havana (February–March). Breaks with his patron. Translations of Hughes’s poems appear in Contemporáneos (Mexico City), Sur (Buenos Aires), Revista de La Habana, and El Diario de la Marina (Havana). Nicolás Guillén also publishes his interview with Hughes in El Diario de la Marina.


1932–33  Publishes Scottsboro, Limited and The Dream Keeper. Travels to Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco. Leaves for Moscow in June 1932 and spends fourteen months in the Soviet Union. Visits Tashkent, Samarkand, Bokhara, Ashgabat, Merv (Turkmenistan), and Permetyeb (central Asia). Returns to Moscow in January 1933. Departs for Vladivostok in June, then returns to the San Francisco via Kyoto, Tokyo, and Shanghai. Takes up residence in Carmel in August.

1934–35  Publishes The Ways of White Folks. Labor unrest in California. Travels to Mexico on the occasion of his father’s death and stays for several months in Mexico City. Returns to the USA
and joins his mother in Oberlin, Ohio. Visits New York. His play *Mulatto* opens on Broadway.

1936

Wins a Guggenheim Fellowship. Ildefonso Pereda Valdés publishes *Antología de la poesía negra americana* in Santiago de Chile.

1937

Spends summer in Paris for the League of American Writers. In August travels to Valencia, then on to Madrid, as a war reporter for the *Baltimore Afro-American*. Leaves Madrid for Barcelona in mid-November. Returns to the USA via Paris at the end of the year.

1938

Publishes *A New Song*. Rafael Alberti publishes his Hughes translation in *El Mono Azul*. First visit to UK in September 1938.

1939–41

Takes up residence in California again, mainly in Carmel, and spends some time in Chicago. Publishes *The Big Sea*. Moves back to New York in December 1941.

1942–43

Begins to write a weekly column for the *Chicago Defender* in November 1942. Dudley Fitts publishes his *Anthology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry*. Gastón Figueira publishes his translations of several Hughes poems in *Nueva Democracia, Sustancia*, and *Aurora*.

1944–45

Under surveillance by the FBI. *The Big Sea* appears in Buenos Aires as *El inmenso mar* in a translation by Luisa Rivaud and in Rio de Janeiro as *O imenso mar* in a Portuguese translation by Francisco Burkinski. Ortiz Oderigo publishes a translation of *Not Without Laughter* (*Pero con risas*), also in Buenos Aires.

1947


1948


1949

Teaches in Chicago for three months. Hughes and Arna Bontemps publish *The Poetry of the Negro, 1746–1949*. Tomás Blanco publishes his Hughes translations in *Asomante*.
Chronology

1950  Publishes *Simple Speaks His Mind*. González Flores includes Hughes translations in *Una pareja de tantas*.

1951–52  Hughes publishes *Montage of a Dream Deferred, Laughing to Keep from Crying*, and his translation of García Lorca’s *Romancero gitano* as *Gypsy Ballads*. López Narváez includes translations of Hughes’s poetry in *El cielo en el río* (Bogotá). Publishes *Poems from Black Africa, Ethiopia, and Other Countries*.

1953  Testifies twice before the McCarthy Committee in late March. Poetry translations by Figueira appear in the *Revista Iberoamericana*. Pereda Valdés’s *Antología* is reissued in Montevideo. Toruño publishes the anthology *Poesía negra* in Mexico.


1955  Gáler publishes his translation of Hughes’s novel *Laughing to Keep from Crying* (*Riendo por no llorar*). Florit publishes *Antología de la poesía norteamericana contemporánea*. Hughes is also included in Oswaldino Marques’s *Videntes e sonâmbulos: Coletânea de poemas norte-americanos* (Rio de Janeiro).

1956–57  Publishes *I Wonder As I Wander*. Gáler publishes *Poemas de Langston Hughes*. Hughes’s poems are included in Gandelman et al., *Negros famosos a America do Norte*. Hughes publishes *The First Book of the West Indies* and *Selected Poems of Gabriela Mistral*.


1965–66  Tours Europe for nearly two months for the U.S. State Department. Vacations in Tunis. Travels to Dakar, Senegal, to be honored at the First World Festival of Negro Arts. Visits other African countries, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Sudan.


1970  Martins publishes Poemas de Langston Hughes in João Pessoa, Brazil.

1971  Bansart’s students include translations of Hughes’s poems in their anthology Poesía negra-africana. (Chile) Rivaud publishes excerpts from The Big Sea as Renacimiento negro.

1972  Ruiz del Vizo includes translations of Hughes’s poems in Black Poetry of the Americas.

1973  Gary Bartz and NTU Troop debut their version of I’ve Known Rivers in Montreux.


2003  Several of his translations are reprinted in volume 16 of The Collected Works of Langston Hughes.