

# THEME FOR ENGLISH B

By Langston Hughes

The instructor said,

Go home and write  
a page tonight.  
And let that page come out of you---  
Then, it will be true.

I wonder if it's that simple?  
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.  
I went to school there, then Durham, then here  
to this college on the hill above Harlem.  
I am the only colored student in my class.  
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem  
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,  
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,  
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator  
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me  
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what  
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:  
hear you, hear me---we two---you, me, talk on this page.  
(I hear New York too.) Me---who?  
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.  
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.  
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,  
or records---Bessie, bop, or Bach.  
I guess being colored doesn't make me NOT like  
the same things other folks like who are other races.  
So will my page be colored that I write?  
Being me, it will not be white.  
But it will be  
a part of you, instructor.  
You are white---  
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.  
That's American.  
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.  
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.  
But we are, that's true!  
As I learn from you,  
I guess you learn from me---  
although you're older---and white---  
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

1951

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