

Akib Chowdhury

THEME FOR ENGLISH B

By Langston Hughes (published 1951)

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.

4th year
in college

Very
familiar
(Home)

He is
Harlem

His paper
will be very
different
compared to
his white class

The both make
up each others
experiences

was confused by this
but realized
overlooks
he must be
harlem (could symobize class
and race inequality)
like morningside is
more special
→ maybe he
doesn't like
the Columbia area