

Sterling A. Brown's Biography



Sterling A. Brown's poetry was influenced by jazz, the blues, work songs and spirituals and, like Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, and other black poets of the period, his writing expresses his concerns about race in America.

Brown was born in Washington, D.C., in 1901. He graduated from Dunbar High School and went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Williams College. In 1923, he earned a master's degree from Harvard University and was employed as a teacher at the Virginia Seminary and College in Lynchburg until 1926. Three years later, Brown began teaching at Howard University and in 1932 his first book, *Southern Road*, was published. He also served a visiting professor at several other notable institutions, including Vassar College, New York University (NYU), Atlanta University, and Yale University.

In 1932, Brown published his first book of poetry *Southern Road*. It was a collection of poems with rural themes and treated the simple lives of poor, black, country folk with extra poignancy and dignity. It also used authentic dialect and structures. Despite the success of this book, he struggled to find a publisher for the followup, *No Hiding Place*. Brown was most known for his authentic southern black dialect. Brown died on January 13, 1989.