

# *The Harlem Renaissance Virtual Gallery Walk*

## Introduction

**WATCH:** [The Harlem Renaissance - YouTube](#)

**LOOK:** [Harlem-Renaissance-Map](#)

## The Art

**VISIT:** [Home | AaronDouglas.Org](#)

On the homepage there are some works of Douglas that you can click on. View specifically "Aspiration" and "Into Bondage" both from 1936.

**RESPOND:**

1. For "Aspiration" what elements within the painting do you notice that connect with what you know of the Black experience in America? What symbols are seen in this piece of art?
2. For "Into Bondage" what elements do you see that connect with the Black experience? What images and symbols are seen in this selection?

**VISIT:** [James Van Der Zee's Photographs: A Portrait of Harlem \(nga.gov\)](#)

**RESPOND:**

3. How do Van Der Zee's photos work against stereotypes of Black Americans of the day - especially of those basing their ideas on Southern Blacks? How are these photos potentially empowering?

## The Music

**LISTEN:** [Billie Holiday & Her Orchestra - Strange Fruit \(Audio\)](#)

**RESPOND:**

4. Recorded in 1939, what is this song about? If it helps, check out the lyrics online. How might a song like this resonate with audiences, especially Blacks that moved North?

**WATCH:** [Hellzapoppin' \(1941\) - Whitey's Lindy Hoppers](#)

**RESPOND:** This film from the 40s caught Whitey's Lindy Hoppers in their last years before break up due to the war. They got their start during the twenties.

5. Consider the "wild and rebellious" 1920s feel. How does this swing dance style and energy match that general aesthetic?

## The Writers and Poets

**READ:** [Remember | The Poetry Foundation](#)

**RESPOND:**

6. How through this poem do we see the legacy of slavery coming through?

**READ:** [The Negro Speaks of Rivers by Langston Hughes](#)

**RESPOND:**

7. How does Hughes connect the experience of being Black with nature?

**READ:** [Cross | by Langston Hughes](#)

**RESPOND:**

8. Hughes, who was biracial, writes of the struggle of identity in this poem. How does this align with the race consciousness of the Harlem Renaissance?

**READ:** [America | by Claude McKay](#)

**RESPOND:**

9. How would you explain McKay's views on America as expressed in this poem?