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**Langston Hughes, the *poet laureate* of the Harlem Renaissance, lent his voice to the cause of human equality and shone a light on the struggles of being black in the United States during a troubling time.**

**Hughes was born right here in Joplin, Missouri. His poem – *I, Too* – is a simple statement that described his social status and the positive outlook he had for his own future and for the future of his race.**

*I, too, sing America.*

*I am the darker brother.*

*They send me to eat in the kitchen*

*When company comes,*

*But I laugh,*

*And eat well,*

*And grow strong.*

*Tomorrow,*

*I’ll be at the table*

*When company comes,*

*Nobody’ll dare*

*Say to me,*

*“Eat in the kitchen,"*

*Then.*

*Besides,*

*They’ll see how beautiful I am*

*And be ashamed—*

*I, too, am America*