

Freedom's Plow by Langston Hughes (1943)

When a man starts out with nothing,
When a man starts out with his hands
Empty, but clean,
When a man starts out to build a world,
He starts first with himself
And the faith that is in his heat –
The strength there,
The will to build.

First in the heart is the dream –
Then the mind starts seeking a way,
His eyes look out on the world,
On the great wooded world,
On the rich soil of the world,
On the rivers of the world.

Activity:

1. Ask students to write a poem similar to Langston Hughes *Freedom's Plow* on a topic that is important to them. Why is the topic they chose important? What do they want people to understand about their topic?
2. What do they think Langston Hughes wanted readers to understand when they read *Freedom's Plow*? What does the title "Freedom's Plow" mean?