

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Writer: Langston Hughes | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Quotes

"I've known rivers ancient as the world..."

Exp:

The speaker says he knows rivers that are as old as the world itself. This means the history of Black people began at the very start of human life. It shows that their roots are ancient and strong.

"My soul has grown deep like the rivers."

Exp:

The speaker feels that his soul has become deep and wise like the rivers. It means he has gained knowledge and strength from the long history of his black race.

"I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo...

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it."

Exp:

These lines connect the Black people to ancient civilizations of the world. The speaker says he lived near great rivers like the Euphrates, Congo, and Nile. This means that his race was a part of history, wisdom, and greatness from the beginning.