

Here To Yonder

Langston Hughes

RIGHT NOW AT HULL HOUSE In Chicago there is a fine exhibit of prints and paintings by the young Negro artist, William E. Smith. I wish I was there to see it.

And right now in New York there is at the Museum of Modern Art a wonderful display of photographs by the French photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson. I wish I was there to see that, too.

Also now it is Lent in Mexico and good Catholics mourn for the trials and tribulations and crucifixion and death of Christ. And in a little while the statues of the bleeding and mutilated body of Christ crowned with thorns will



hang from the crosses or lie before the altars in hundreds of candle-lighted churches throughout Mexico in the dusk and dim of ancient edifices. But on Easter Sunday the churches will blaze with light and glory, for Christ shall have risen, and there will be joy and jubilation in Mexico. I wish I was there to see it.

Also in a little while now it will be spring in Paris, and there is nothing anywhere else in the world like spring in Paris with the pale green of young leaves along the Boulevards and a golden haze in the air and children with their mamas or nurses beginning to play in the parks. I wish I was there to see spring come in Paris.

Ubiquitousness Not Human

BUT UBIQUITOUSNESS is not given to men. Only gods are omnipresent. You have to be divine to be everywhere. Maybe from heaven you can look all over the earth. But certainly it is not possible to do so from Atlanta where I am now. But you may dream of everywhere, and Talmadge can't stop anybody from dreaming, not even those of us who ride in Jim Crow cars.

To tell the truth, I do not wish I was away from Atlanta now because Atlanta is an interesting town, my campus is interesting, and my students are interesting. So today in Georgia, I remember Mexico at Easter and Paris in the spring and Cartier-Bresson and his camera as I knew him in Mexico and France and Spain, and William Smith when he was just starting to make paintings and block-prints at Karamu House in Cleveland.

Back in the WPA days of the 1930s, we called him Skinny. He was a tall thin dark boy who studied and worked around the studios of the Playhouse Settlement, before it was called Karamu House. The Jelliffes, Russell and Rowena, who run the Settlement, and who have done so much to develop talent among young Negroes in Cleveland—especially through their art workshops and the unexcelled Gimpin Players—the Jelliffes thought Skinney had talent.

He did have talent. Through the mediums of drawing, linoleum and wood-blocks, and painting this talent came out clear long before Skinny was called to the army and did his service. The Cleveland Museum of Art bought some of his prints for its permanent collection. Alain Locke and James Porter wrote about him in their books on Negro art. And right now if you are near enough to take a trip over to Chicago's Hull House, you can see evidences of William E. Smith's talent there on display in his current one-man show—the humor and pathos of Negro life captured in line and color.

French Photog Traveler

LIKE MYSELF, CARTIER-BRESSON does not simply wish himself someplace very long. He goes! Since I first met him in Mexico in 1935, he has been all over America and all over Europe with his camera. What Smith does in line and color, Cartier-Bresson does with his camera eye on film transferred to paper. His photographs are much more than photographs. They are comments on life and living, people and their ways, sensual and emotional as often as visual.

Earth-warm and human, sometimes startlingly revealing, sometimes satirically humorous, never dull, the little squares of paper that are his photographs take on a life all their own. To the eyes and to the heart, none are dull, none are merely pictures.

Henri Cartier-Bresson is married to a charming Javanese girl, a dancer. Away from Paris for a few months, both are delightful additions to the cosmopolitan life of New York this winter. In midtown, downtown, or uptown in Harlem, almost any day you might see them, him with his little camera over his shoulder, her in a colorful sarong. And these days, every day at New York's Museum of Modern Art, crowds flock to see his pictures. You ought to go, too, if you aren't too far away, and haven't already been. Cartier-Bresson shows what an artist can do with a camera. But you need not be an artist to understand his work. You will like his pictures.