



Harryette Mullen

Harryette Mullen was born on July 1, 1953, in Florence, Alabama. She was raised in Texas and became fascinated by language and poetry at a young age. Mullen recalls, “At school and at church we were always called on to memorize and recite poems—a whole lot of Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson and Paul Lawrence Dunbar.” These poets influenced Mullen, whose poetry won an award and publication in the local newspaper when she was in high school.

Mullen’s book *Tree Tall Woman* considers the lives of southern black women. Her other collections include *Muse & Drudge* and *Sleeping with the Dictionary*. Mullen uses humor and wordplay to discuss complicated topics. Writing connects her with people from various races and ethnicities worldwide: “The more people you can talk to and understand, the richer your life and experience can be.” Mullen teaches African-American literature and creative writing at the University of California, Los Angeles.