

Jean Toomer



An important figure in the Harlem Renaissance, Jean Toomer was born in Washington, DC, the grandson of the first governor of African-American descent in the United States. A descendent of both white and black heritage, Toomer attended both all-white and all-black segregated schools, and from early on in his life he resisted being classified by race, preferring to call himself simply American. In 1922, he began writing heavily about the African-American experience, eventually culminating with the publication of his most famous work, *Cane* (1923), an experimental collection of stories and poems. It was hailed by critics and is seen as an important part of the Harlem Renaissance.