



Summary Article: **Arna Bontemps (1902–1973)**

From *African American Almanac*

Poet, Novelist



Image from: [Arna Bontemps, photographed by Carl Van Vechten,...](#) in *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*

Arna Bontemps was one of the most productive black writers of the twentieth century. Born in Alexandria, Louisiana, and raised in California, Bontemps received his B.A. from Pacific Union College in Angwin in 1923. The next year his poetry first appeared in *Crisis* magazine, the NAACP periodical edited by W.E.B. DuBois. Two years later, *Golgotha Is a Mountain* won the Alexander Pushkin Award, and in 1927, *Nocturne at Bethesda* achieved first honors in the *Crisis* poetry contest. *Personals*, Bontemps's collected poems, was published in 1963.

In the late 1920s Bontemps decided to try his hand at prose, and over the next decade produced such novels as *God Sends Sunday* (1931); *Black Thunder* (1936); and *Drums at Dusk* (1939).

His books for young people include *We Have Tomorrow* (1945) and *Story of the Negro* (1948). Likewise of literary merit are such children's books as *Sad-Faced Boy* (1937) and *Slappy Hooper* (1946). He edited *American Negro Poetry* and two anthologies with Langston Hughes among others.

In 1968 he edited a volume of children's poetry. Other publications were *One Hundred Years of Negro Freedom* (1961); *Anyplace But Here* (published in 1966 in collaboration with Jack Convoy); *Black Thunder* (reprinted 1968); *Great Slave Narratives* (1969); *The Harlem Renaissance Remembered: Essays* (1972, 1984); and *The Old South*.

Bontemps died on June 4, 1973, of a heart attack.

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Arna Bontemps (1902--1973). (2012). In L. Bracks, *African American almanac : 400 years of triumph, courage and excellence* . Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/bontemps_arna_1902_1973



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"Arna Bontemps (1902–1973)." *African American Almanac*, Lean'tin Bracks, Visible Ink Press, 1st edition, 2012. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/bontemps_arna_1902_1973. Accessed 16 Oct. 2019.