In the short essay “Salvation”, author Langston Hughes writes about when he was young and went to a “revival” with his Auntie Reed, which led to his atheism. The night of the “revival” Langston and other children sat on the mourners’ bench as “sinners” to be delivered to Jesus Christ. His Auntie Reed had described to Langston a bright light, and a feeling inside upon meeting with Jesus. After the preacher gave his sermon, the children on the mourners’ bench were asked to join Jesus. Elderly church members shouted and prayed as the number of children on the bench began to dwindle as they joined Jesus. Finally, the majority of the children had gone to the altar except Westley and Langston. Westley, who became tired from the long revival, walked to the altar. Westley did not go to the altar because he met Jesus, but to finally get the revival over with to go home. Langston was the last to go up to the altar, which ended the revival. Although Langston went up to the altar he did not met Jesus. Langston waited all night, the whole revival, and never met Jesus. Later that night after the revival Langston sobbed in his room, but Auntie Reed thought his tears were of joy from having found Christ. “But I was really crying because I couldn't bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church that I hadn't seen Jesus, and that now I didn't believe there was a Jesus anymore, since he didn't come to help me” Hughes wrote. Langston Hughes’s life changed after the revival, he became the leader in literature during the Harlem Renaissance known for its atheism author and poet.

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born on February 1st, 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. Hughes an African American writer during the Harlem Renaissance period, but before his fame Hughes started writing at a young age. Hughes lived with his grandmother in Kansas until thirteen; at a young age Hughes felt insecure and unsure of himself because he was not allowed to live with his parents. After Hughes’s mother remarried he was able to live with her and his stepfather in Lincoln, Illinois. In Illinois, Hughes wrote his first verse and was class poet in his eighth grade class. Hughes’s stepfather found work in Chicago, but Hughes stayed to finish high School. Hughes’s talents in writing began to be recognized when his verses were published in Central High *Monthly* that was a refined school magazine. Hughes went in to become a staff member of the *Monthly* and a regular in the magazine.

Poets Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman became Hughes’ influences in literature when his English teacher introduced them. The summer of Hughes junior year was spent with his father in Toluca, Mexico, but during that summer Hughes did not get along with his father. The conflicts between Hughes and his father were painful but contributed to Hughes maturity. When Hughes came back to Illinois his writing matured, but during his senior year his poetry consisted of division. After Hughes graduated he decided to go back to Mexico to visit his father, he planned this so he could convince his father to finance his college education to Columbia University. However, when Hughes got to Mexico the tension between him and his father was stronger. The reason for their intensified tension was because Hughes waned to be a writer while his father preferred he be an engineer. Hughes was able to impress his father when Brownies Books and Crisis accepted his poems. Hughes entered Columbia University but for only a year in 1921 that’s where he found Harlem.

Langston Hughes became a prominent figure during the Harlem Renaissance for his works on atheism. Hughes being an atheist was considered a taboo because of his family’s highly religious background. In “Goodbye Christ” Hughes writes about how he feels that the idea of Christ is just a way for people to make money. Hughes being an atheist believes there is no need to Christ and his disciples in “Goodbye Christ”, he even goes as far to tell them to leave. ”Listen, Christ, You did alright in your day, I reckon But that day’s gone now. They ghosted you up a swell story, too, called it Bible” Hughes wrote as he is basically calling the Bible a bunch of tall tales in “Goodbye Christ”. Hughes also felt that Jesus’s message is being “pimped” and sold in “Goodbye Christ”, verses like The world is mine from now on And nobody’s gonna sell ME To a king, or a general, Or a millionaire”.

In “Goodbye Christ” Hughes also hints to his communism with the verse “Make way for a new guy with no religion at all A real guy named Marx Communist Lenin Peasant Stalin Worker ME I said, ME!”. Hughes’s bold statement on his feelings toward Christianity did not go unnoticed; his poem shocked many during that time period. In the 1930’s, when he published “Goodbye Christ”, religion was a highly regarded subject that many did not dear to tarnish. Further, Hughes’s “Goodbye Christ” was censored numerous times because of the exploitation of Christianity and sacrilege of Christ in the poem. Hughes’s political views along with his atheism suggested in “Goodbye Christ”, his references to Marx, Lenin, and Stalin gives his the impression that he was indeed a communist.

Langston Hughes was a bold writer in his time; he broke social norms with his considerably “taboo” way of thinking. Hughes went on to publish many novels and books of poetry along with biographies.

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