

## **Jazz and African American Literature**

In "Many Thousands Gone," James Baldwin writes, "It is only in his music...that the Negro in America has been able to tell his story." Like Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, and many other African American artists and intellectuals, Baldwin argues that engagement with jazz is an indispensable part of coming to terms with African American literature and culture.

In this course, we will follow Baldwin's suggestion and read the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century African American literature by considering the ways in which this literature is influenced by, and responds to, jazz. We will listen to jazz recordings, we will read what major African American authors have written about jazz, and we will think about the ways in which the relationship between music and literature can help us understand the function of literature and the broad significance of African American culture.