

Zora Neale Hurston's Glossary of Harlem Slang

<p>Air out: leave, flee, stroll Astorperious: haughty, biggity Aunt Hagar: Negro race (also Aunt Hager's children) Bad Hair: Negro-type hair Bailing: having fun Bam & down in Bam: down South Battle-hammed: badly formed about the lips Beating up your gums: talking to no purpose Beluthahatchie: next station beyond Hell Big boy: stout fellow, in South it means fool Blowing your top: getting very angry; occasionally used to mean, He's doing fine Boogie-woogie: type of dancing and rhythm, in South it meant secondary syphilis Bull-skating: bragging Butt sprung: a suit or a skirt out of shape in the rear Coal scuttle blonde: black woman Cold: exceeding, well, etc Collar a nod: sleep Collor a hot: eat a meal Colorscale: high yaller, yaller, high brown, vaseline brown, seal brown, low brown, dark brown Conk buster: cheap liquor; also an intellectual Negro Cruising: parading down the avenue Cut: doing something well Dark black: a casually black person Dat thing: sex of either sex Dat's your mammy: same as, "So is your old man" Diddy-Wah-Diddy: a far place, a measure of distance Dig: understand Draped down: dressed in the height of Harlem fashion Dumb to the fact: you don't know what you are talking about Dusty butt: cheap prostitute Eight-rock: very black person Every postman on his beat: kinky hair First thing smoking: a train Frail eel: a pretty girl Free school: free schools, pretty yellow teachers and dumb Negroes Function: a small, unventilated dance My people!: sad and satiric expression in the Negro language Naps: kinky hair Nearer my God to Thee: good hair Nothing to the bear but his curly hair: I call your bluff</p>	<p>Gator-faced: long, black face with big mouth Getting on some stiff time: really doing well with your racket Get you to go: to force the opponent to run Ginny Gall: a suburb of Hell Gif up off of me: quit talking about me Go when the wagon comes: You may be acting biggity now, but you'll cool down when enough power gets behind you Good hair: Caucasian-type hair Granny Grunt: a mythical character to whom most questions may be referred Ground rations: sex, also under rations Gum beater: a blowhard, a braggart Gut-bucket: low dive, type of music Gut-foot: bad case of fallen arches Handkerchief-head: sycophant type of Negro; also an Uncle Tom Hauling: fleeing on foot I don't deal in coal: I don't keep company with black women I'm cracking but I'm facking: I'm wisecracking, but I'm telling the truth Inky dink: very black person I shot him lightly and he died politely: I completely outdid him Jar head: Negro man Jelly: sex Jig: Negro, a corrupted shortening of Zigaboo Jook: a pleasure house, in the class of gut-bucket Jooking: playing a musical instrument or dancing in the manner of the jooks Juice: liquor July jam: something very hot Jump salty: get angry Kitchen mechanic: a domestic Knock yourself out: have a good time Lightly, slightly, and politely: doing things perfectly Little sister: measures of hotness Liver-lip: pendulous, thick purple lips Made hair: hair that has been straightened Mammy: a term of insult Miss Anne: a white woman Mister Charlie: a white man Monkey chaser: a West Indian Mug Man: a small time thug Sender: he or she who can get you to go, i.e., has what it takes Smoking: looking someone over Solid: perfect Sooner: anything cheap and mongrel</p>
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<p>Now you cookin' with gas: now your talking</p> <p>Ofay: white person</p> <p>Old cuffee: Negro</p> <p>Palmer House: walking flat-footed</p> <p>Pancake: a humble type of Negro</p> <p>Park ape: an ugly, underprivileged Negro</p> <p>Peckerwood: poor and unloved class of Southern whites</p> <p>Peeping through my likkers: carrying on even though drunk</p> <p>Pe-ola: a very white Negro girl</p> <p>Piano: spare ribs</p> <p>Pig meat: young girl</p> <p>Pilch: house or apartment</p> <p>Pitch toes: yellow girl</p> <p>Playing the dozens: low-rating the ancestors of your opponent</p> <p>Red neck: poor Southern white man</p> <p>Reefer: marijuana cigarette, also a drag</p> <p>Righteous mass or grass: good hair</p> <p>Righteous rags: the components of a Harlem-style suit</p> <p>Rug-cutter: originally a person frequenting house-rent parties, became a good dancer</p> <p>Russian: a Southern Negro up north, "Rushed up here"</p> <p>Scrap iron: cheap liquor</p> <p>Sell out: run in fear</p>	<p>Stanch: to begin</p> <p>Stomp: low dance</p> <p>Stormbuzzard: shiftless, homeless character</p> <p>Stroll: doing something well</p> <p>Sugar Hill: northwest sector of Harlem, near Washington Heights, many professionals</p> <p>The bear: confession of poverty</p> <p>The big apple: New York City</p> <p>The man: the law or powerful boss</p> <p>Thousand on a plate: beans</p> <p>Tight head: one with kinky hair</p> <p>Trucking: strolling</p> <p>V and X: five-and-ten-cent store</p> <p>West Hell: another suburb of Hell, worse than the original</p> <p>What's on the rail for the lizard?: suggestion for moral turpitude</p> <p>Whip it to the red: beat your head until it is bloody</p> <p>Woofing: aimless talk</p> <p>Young suit: ill-fitting, too small</p> <p>Your likker told you: misguided behavior</p> <p>Zigaboo: a Negro</p> <p>Zoot suit with the reet pleat: Harlem style suit, padded shoulders, 43-inch trousers at the knee with small cuffs, high waistline</p>
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