

75 Years Later: Their Eyes Were STILL Watching God
By: Michelle Cuttino

Zora Neale Hurston is a pioneer of black heritage and African-American literature. Born to a Baptist-preacher father and a mother who was a schoolteacher, Zora was the fifth of eight children. She was an integral part of the Harlem Renaissance and one of the most esteemed black writers of her time. Her writing style was very controversial due to her usage of black dialect. However, Zora held her ground and wrote how she spoke, and has since been praised for her use of natural speech patterns.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the release of her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The book was adapted into a television movie starring Halle Berry and Michael Ealy by Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Productions in 2005. As the book jacket reads, this novel is...

"One of the most important works of twentieth-century American literature, Zora Neale Hurston's beloved 1937 classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published -- perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature."

In honor of the anniversary, The Jerome L. Greene Performance Space located at 44 Charlton Street, New York, NY 10014, will be celebrating with various ceremonies and platforms.

The events include:

I, TOO, SING AMERICA: LANGSTON AND ZORA'S UN-SUNG
COLLABORATION

Presented by WQXR, Hosted by Terrance McKnight
Friday, February 24 at 7pm

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD: A Radio Play
Starring Phylicia Rashad, Roslyn Ruff, Brandon Dirden and Leslie Uggams.
Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson and adapted by Arthur Yorinks
Wednesday, February 29 and Thursday, March 1 at 7pm

A LITERARY SALON

Mix and Mingle and enjoy readings from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by poet and actor Carl Hancock Rux

Wednesday, March 14 at 6 pm

WOMEN WRITERS ON THE HORIZON

With Alice Walker, Sonia Sanchez and Ruby Dee. Moderated by Zora's niece, Luce Anne Hurston

Wednesday, March 28 at 7pm

For tickets and more information, visit their website at www.thegreenespace.org.