

"Who but the Lord" a poem by Langston Hughes

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Langston Hughes poetry is highly touted for being timeless and topical. His "Who but the Lord," for example, was published in 1949 but it seems to reflect the social reality we now experience in 2020. The voice of the speaker is ironic, without anger or hostility. However, the ending of the poem expresses an extremely provocative assertion. Here is the poem:

I looked and I saw
That man they call the Law.
He was coming
Down the street at me!
I had visions in my head
Of being laid out cold and dead,
Or else murdered
By the third degree.

I said, *O, Lord, if you can,*
Save me from that man!
Don't let him make a pulp out of me!
But the Lord he was not quick.
The Law raised up his stick
And beat the living hell
Out of me!

Now, I do not understand
Why God don't protect a man
From police brutality.
Being poor and black,
I've no weapon to strike back
So who but the Lord
Can protect me?

We'll see.

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