

## Hart Crane

### Poet Description:

Born in a small Ohio town, Hart Crane grew up in Cleveland. He went to New York after leaving high school, but ended up returning to Cleveland until 1923, along the way accumulating work experience in advertising agencies, a newspaper, and in his father's businesses. He faced continual difficulty and much stress supporting himself and had to rely on relatives and a benefactor.

The sheer ambition of his book-length project, *The Bridge*, frustrated Crane's attempts to begin it from 1923 to 1926. A change of location from New York City to a summer cottage on the Isles of Pines off the Cuban coast resulted in an outburst of new writing, and all but four of the poem's fifteen sections were substantially complete when an October 1926 hurricane devastated the island. The poem sequence takes its title and the focus of its opening and closing poems, "Proem" and "Atlantis," from a much-celebrated piece of New York architecture and engineering, the Brooklyn Bridge. Widely considered both an aesthetic triumph and a highly successful technical project, Crane reasonably takes it as a symbol of American ambition and spirit combined. By reaching back into American history to Columbus's return voyage from the New World ("Ave Maria"), traveling through the Mississippi River region by train in the present day ("The River"), and then imaginatively flying by plane over the east coast of the United States ("Cape Hatteras"), Crane attempts to articulate a unifying vision of America. Yet if the bridge is a transcendent and ecstatic symbol, the airplane in "Cape Hatteras" is sometimes a demonic one, given over to war rather than cultural poetry. The conflict is resolved, if at all, in the controversial bravado performance of "Atlantis," the final poem, which is one of the most rhetorically flamboyant texts among American long poems. Reacting to Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Crane wrote a long poem sequence that was American rather than international. Crane also wished to substitute cultural optimism for Eliot's bleak pessimism and to imagine that collaborative human work could offer some hope for the future. At the end, Crane saw little hope for his own; only thirty-three years old, he jumped overboard from a boat returning from Mexico and drowned.

### Race/Ethnicity:

European <sup>[1]</sup>

### Picture:

**Gender:**

Male <sup>[2]</sup>

**Sexuality:**

Gay <sup>[3]</sup>

**First Name:**

Hart

**Last Name:**

Crane

**Birth & Death Dates:**

Friday, July 21, 1899 to Wednesday, April 27, 1932

**School of Poetry:**

Modernist <sup>[4]</sup>

**Birth Place:**

Garrettsville , Ohio

United States

See map: Google Maps <sup>[5]</sup>

Ohio US

**Death Place:**

Florida

United States

See map: Google Maps <sup>[6]</sup>

Florida US

**Group visibility:**

Private - accessible only to group members

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**Source URL:** <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/poet/hart-crane>

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[3] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/category/sexuality/gay>

[4] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/school-poetry/modernist>

[5] [http://maps.google.com?q=46.880607+-](http://maps.google.com?q=46.880607+-87.363281+%28%2C+Garrettsville%2C+OH%2C+%2C+us%29)

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