

## MAKING MEANINGS

### First Thoughts

1. Review your Quickwrite. Then, compare your views of America, and your place in it, with McKay's.



### Shaping Interpretations

2. In lines 1–3, what treatment does the poem's speaker say he receives from America? What qualities of America cause the speaker to love the country anyway?
3. America is **personified** in this poem as an entity both cruel and powerful. What **images** suggest America's cruelty and injustice? What images convey its power?
4. A rebel with "not a shred / Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer" might seem to be a rebel who does not really rebel. How does the poem resolve this **paradox**, or apparent contradiction?

### Extending the Text

5. What does this speaker see happening to America as he gazes into "the days ahead"? What messages about America's future do you hear today in various sources—films, TV shows, news programs, magazines, and other media?

Street vendors in Harlem in the 1920s.

UPI/Bettmann.



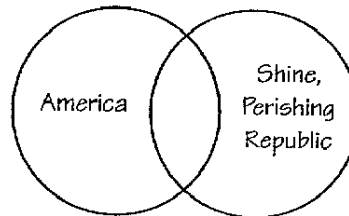
## CHOICES: Building Your Portfolio

### Writer's Notebook

#### 1. Collecting Ideas for an Interpretive Essay



Using a chart like the one below, compare McKay's "America" to Robinson Jeffers's "Shine, Perishing Republic" (page 581). Consider the **form**, **subject**, **point of view**, and **tone** of each poem. List similarities in the overlapping space. Use the remaining spaces to list the differences. Save your notes for possible use with the Writer's Workshop on page 804.



### Creative Writing / Art

#### 2. Get the Message

Design a poster or write a bumper sticker that the speaker in "America" might display. Try to capture in a phrase or two the main idea expressed in the poem.