

Ralph Ellison



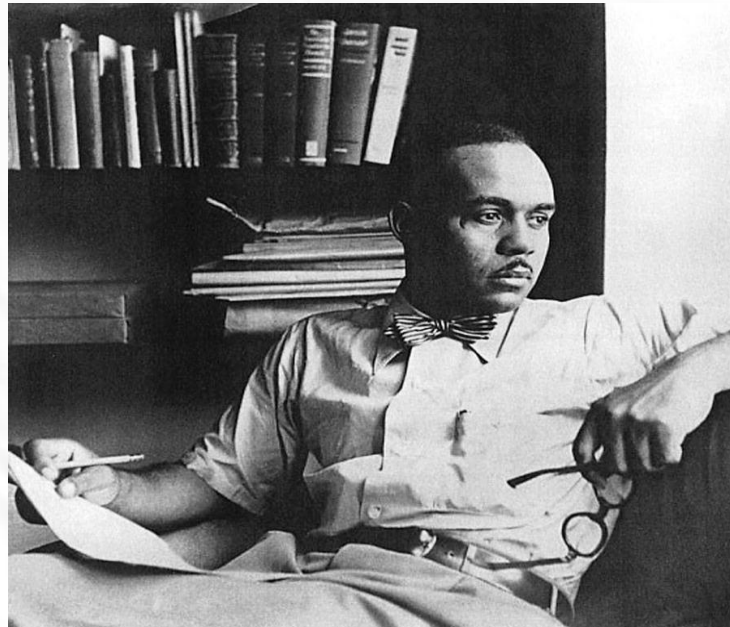
Joshua Cummings

Early Life

- Ralph Ellison, named after Ralph Waldo Emerson (a poet) was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Lewis Alfred Ellison and Ida Millsap were his parents
- He had one younger brother
- His dad died when he was three, he later found out that his dad had wanted him to become a Poet

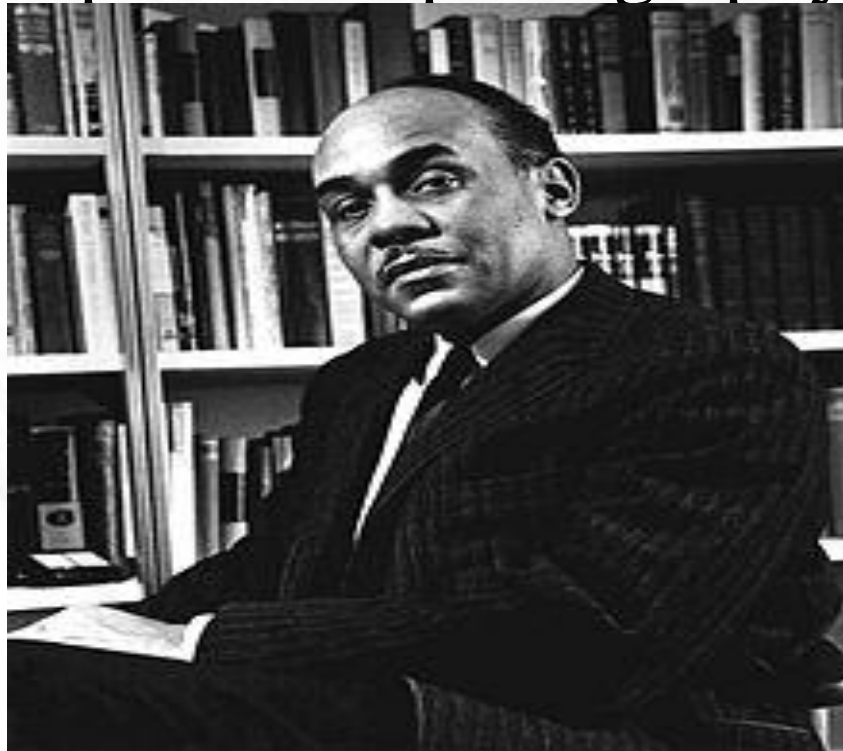
Early Life

- In 1933, Ellison entered the Tuskegee Institute on a scholarship to study music.
- While he studied music, he increasingly spent more time in the library, he found that he loved to read



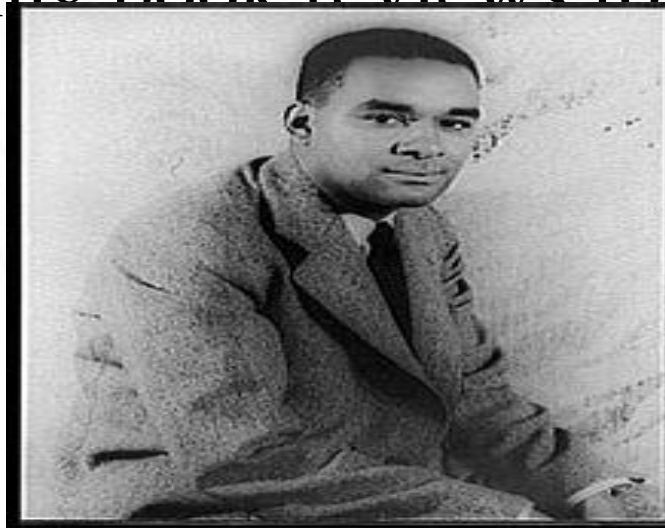
New York City

- After his third year, Ellison moved to New York City to study the visual arts.
- He studied sculpture and photography.



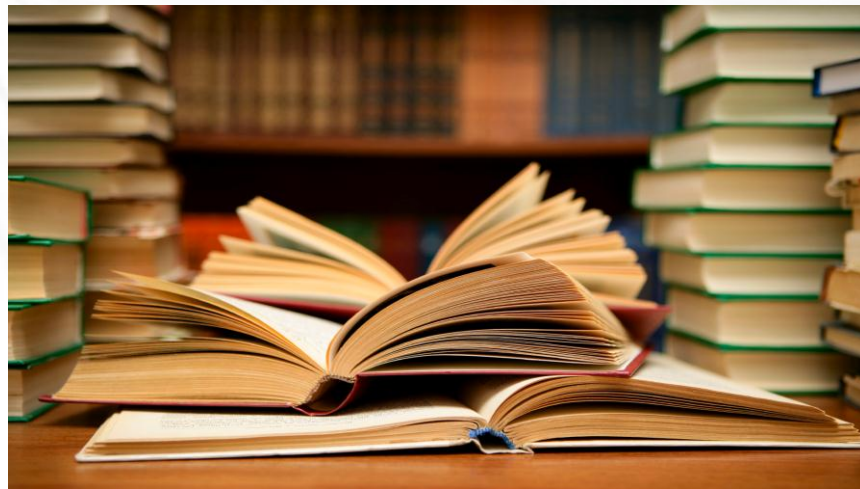
Richard Wright

- Richard Wright (September 4, 1908 – November 28, 1960) was an African-American author of controversial novels, short stories, poems, and non-fictions.
- Ellison met Richard Wright.
- He started writing book reviews for him.



First Books

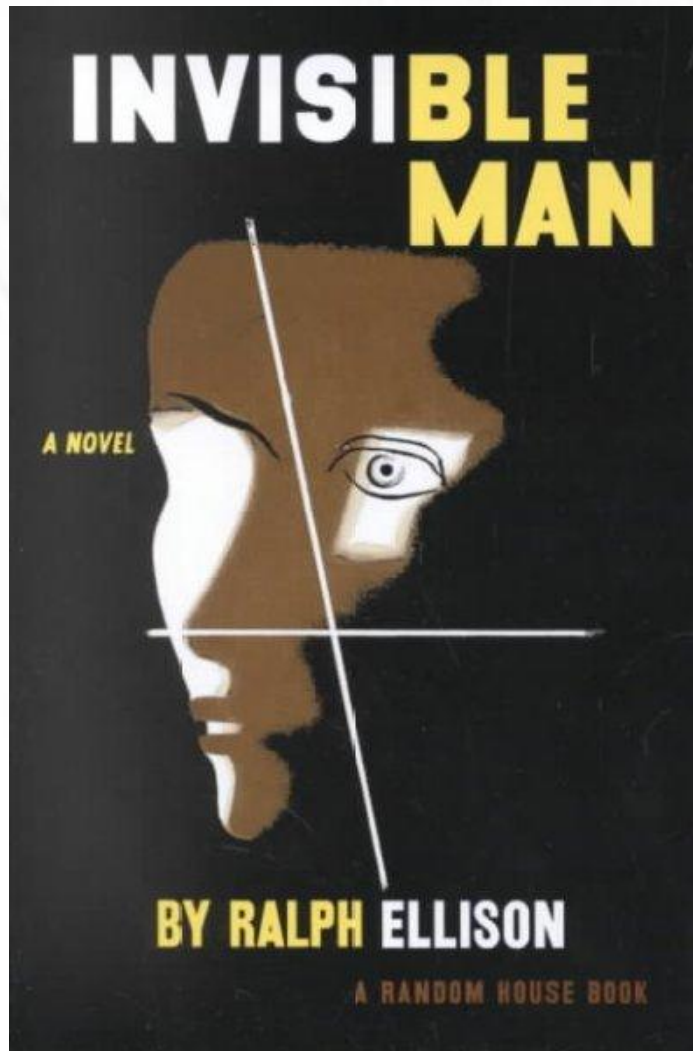
- Richard Wright convinced Ellison to pursue a career in writing
- The first published story written by him was a short story called "Hymie's Bull," a story about Ellison's hoboing on a train with his uncle to get to Tuskegee.



Early Influences

- His father had hoped that he would grow up to be a great writer/poet
- Richard Wright convinced him to start writing full time
- In 1946 he married his second wife, Fanny McConnell. She worked as a photographer. Fanny helped type Ellison's longhand text and assisted her husband in editing the typescript as it progressed.

More Influences



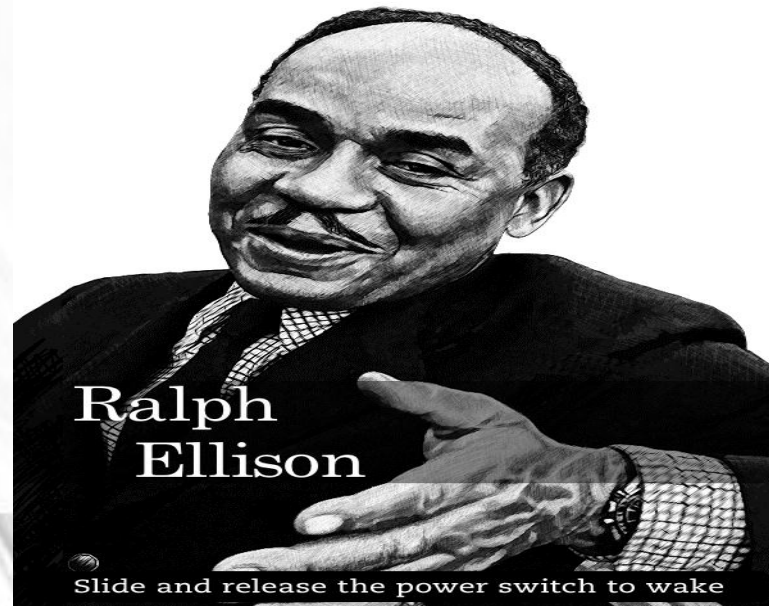
- Being African-American had a great influence on his writing style
- As in Invisible Man, published in 1952, it explores the theme of man's search for his place in society, seen from the perspective of an black man in New York City.

Invisible Man

- Ellison created characters in this book that are dispassionate, educated, articulate and self-aware.
- Through the main character, Ellison explores the contrasts between the Northern and Southern varieties of racism and their effects.
- The narrator is "invisible" in a figurative sense, in that "people refuse to see" him.

Goals

- Originally his goal was to get to college
- Then it was to get somewhere in life with his musical talents at Tuskegee
- Eventually when he became a writer he wanted to be the best he could be and spread his thoughts through his man books he wrote



Societal Significance

- Writing about both the black experience and his love for jazz music, Ellison opened the eyes of the public to the lives of African-Americans during his lifetime
- In 1964, he began to teach at Rutgers University and Yale University teaching many young adults the arts of writing novels and short stories

Legacy

- His Most famous books were:
- Invisible Man (1952)
- Flying Home and Other Stories (1996)
- Juneteenth (1999)
- Three Days Before the Shooting... (2010)



Awards

- Invisible Man won the 1953 U.S. National Book Award for Fiction
- In 1969 he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- In 1985, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts.



Legacy

- In 1975, Ellison was elected to The American Academy of Arts and Letters and his hometown of Oklahoma City honored him with the the Ralph Waldo Ellison Library.



Death

- Ralph Ellison died on April 16, 1994, of pancreatic cancer.
- He was buried at Trinity Church Cemetery in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City.
- He was survived by his wife, Fanny Ellison, who died on November 19, 2005.



Rest In Peace

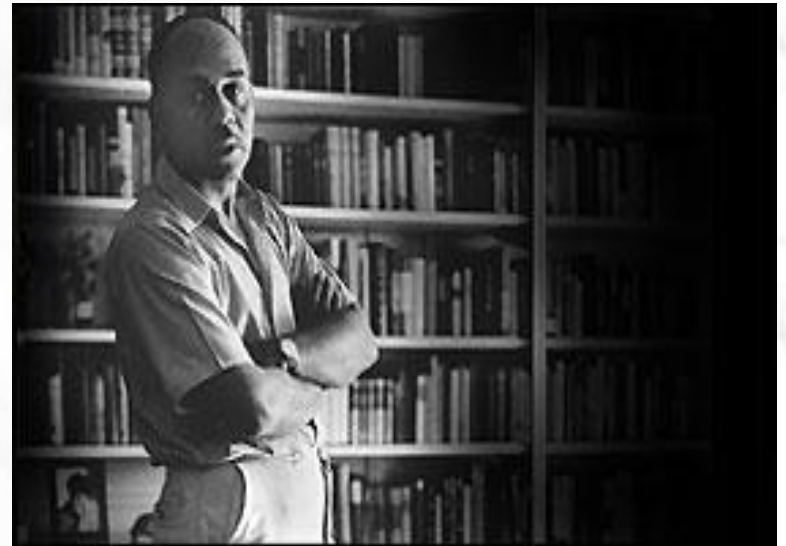
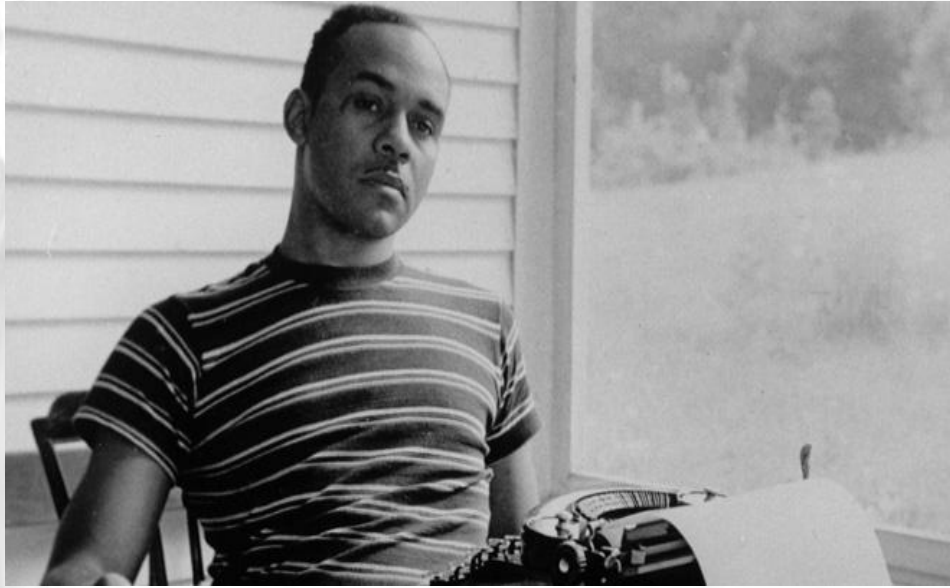
Random Facts

- In 1967, Ellison had a major house fire at his home in Plainfield, Massachusetts, in which it claimed more than 300 pages of books he had been writing.
- After his death, more notes were discovered in his home, resulting in the publication of *Flying Home and Other Stories* in 1996.

After Death

- In 1999, five years after his death, Ellison's second novel, *Juneteenth*, was published under the editorship of John F. Callahan. It was a 368-page condensation of more than 2000 pages written by Ellison over a period of forty years.
- All the manuscripts of this incomplete novel were published collectively on January 26, 2010, by Modern Library, under the title *Three Days Before the Shooting*.

Pictures



The End

