Langston Hughes

THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

I’ve known rivers:
I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow
of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young,
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down
to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden
in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
Response Questions

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- In this poem, Hughes repeats: "My soul has grown deep like the rivers." Is this a simile or a metaphor?

- Why do you think rivers are so special to him?