

#4 – Lynching

“Lynching is the practice whereby a mob – usually several dozen or several hundred persons – takes the law into its own hands in order to injure and kill a person accused of some wrongdoing. The alleged offense can range from a serious crime like theft or murder to a mere violation of local customs and sensibilities. The issue of the victim's guilt is usually secondary, since the mob serves as prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner.”

--Robert L. Zangrando, “About Lynching”

Source: http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/lynching/lynching.htm

Strange Fruit

Abel Meeropol (1937); Recorded as a song by Billie Holiday in 1939

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
 Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
 Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
 Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
 The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
 Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
 Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
 For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
 For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
 Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Source: http://www.lyricsfreak.com/b/billie+holiday/strange+fruit_20017859.html