

Name _____

Date _____



Langston Hughes's "Harlem"

Langston Hughes, one of the most important writers of the...

Langston Hughes, one of the most important writers.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce my good friend...

Langston Hughes, one of the most important writers

Of the Harlem Renaissance,

An era in the 1920s when black artists,

Black writers, black thinkers got to flourish.

In fact, he was the first black writer to make a living

Out of his writings, telling stories 'bout

Black American living, reflecting on their sufferings and joys.

Laughter, language, the music, they rejoiced.

He also wrote about dealing with discrimination,

And what was the Black experience in the nation,

Black navigation, black excellence and black celebration.

Now here's one of his pieces called "Harlem."

Well known, it cemented his stardom.

It begins.

It begins.

It begins.

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

The first line of the poem asks a question,

“What happens to a dream deferred?”

Referring to one’s hopes and plans for the future

Or even the American Dream.

If a dream is deferred, it’s put off or delayed.

Hughes tries to answer the question on the page

Using figurative language that has a meaning

Other than the literal meaning. See what I’m seeing?

Figurative language shows ideas in vivid ways.

Hughes uses similes to compare ideas he laid.

Like “raisin in the sun,”

Once a nutritious food, shriveled and dried up.

So what does that say about what happens to the dream?

If you don’t go after it, it might lose its gleam.

He also repeats “Does it?” like three times,

Which is a rhetorical device called anaphora.

The last line of the poem asks another question:

“Or does it explode?”

Indicating the theme that there’s no clear remedy,

Even the suggestions can’t tell us what

Happens to a dream

Deferred, deferred.

But the consequences seem violent enough to give us

A real message,
Telling us to never leave the dream,
Telling us to never leave the dream,
Telling us to never leave the dream
Deferred.

What happens to a dream deferred?

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like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes: one of the most important writers

Of the Harlem Renaissance.

(x2)