

# “HARLEM” (A Dream Deferred)

-- Langston Hughes

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?*

## Meaning.

'Harlem' (A Dream Deferred) is one of a number of poems Hughes wrote that relates to the lives of African-American people in the USA.

The short poem poses questions about the aspirations of a people and the consequences that might arise if those dreams and hopes are so displaced and cannot come to fruition.

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