

# Dream Deferred

*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?*

*By Langston Hughes*



Langston Hughes was an American poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist. He was one of the earliest innovators of the new literary art form jazz poetry. Hughes is best-known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance. He is also best known for what he wrote about the Harlem Renaissance, "Harlem was in vogue."

"The dream or life goal of a human being is central to what makes the human a valuable member of society, but suppose that person with the dream is told he cannot fulfill his goal just yet; he must wait until society changes, until institutions and laws change to allow him to become the doctor, lawyer, professor, or poet that he finds his talent and desires direct him to be."

The poem, "Dream Deferred", which was written by Langston Hughes in 1951, described the trials that minorities in that time period underwent. Hughes uses heavy symbolism and imagery in this poem.

The question Hughes poses in line one, "What happens to a dream deferred?" sets the environment for the plot and symbolism of the rest of the poem. As Hughes answers the question, he asks if a dream deferred dries up like a raisin in the sun. This symbol means that a dream that is disintegrating and dying like a raisin left out in the sun. If a raisin is left out in the sun too long, it will inevitably die. The same principle can apply to a dream left in the mind too long.