

Poetry essay harlem

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Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem" creates strong impressions in the reader by the uses of tone, metaphors, and images. As we learned on Professor's Minassian Podcast featured on "Eye on Literature" dated January 26, 2007, Langston Hughes "was born on February 12th 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. He published his first poem "Negro speaks of Rivers" in 1921. Hughes became a prominent writer during the Harlem Renaissance. " Today I intend to discuss the use of tone, metaphors, and images in the poem entitled "Harlem" by Langston Hughes. The poem "Harlem" questions the consequences of a deferred dream. It is short poem with very strong tone. We can appreciate this the moment we start reading the first stanza and noticed that it is a large open question, "What happens to a dream deferred?" There is a shift in tone between the first and second stanza "Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?" I feel a change in mood, the writer seems to acknowledge acceptance in a negative way. Throughout the poem we notice and outstanding worrying specially in the last stanza "Or does it explode?" it is italicized and hard-hitting. I understand, in this stanza, that the author feels crushed; this question also sounds like a threat or warning. The poem uses vast metaphors. In the first five lines "What happens to a dream deferred?" he keeps writing, Does it dry up like a raising in the sun? Or fester like a sore- And then run?" The metaphor refers to what would happen to a dream if not pursued, if the dream becomes silent. We see that the dreams he is writing about are not those dreams that we have when sleeping, but moreover the dreams of becoming a better individual. The last stanza also uses metaphor "Or does it explode?" when things explode great damaged, destruction and drastic differences occur. Those will happen if the dream is

deferred and not pursue. Images are all over the poem. The first simile in the third line " Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? " suggests that the dream was left elapsed overtime, and that if left up in the air it may eventually get worse. In line four, the second simile, " fester like a sore", a sore is painful, tender, open injury that gets worse if not taken care of, that being said then, a dream that is not obtained will constantly get rankle and worsen with time. In line six, " stink like rotten meat", suggest that everyone around will " smell" the failure of the dreamer. Line seven and eight " Or crust and sugar over — Like a syrupy sweet? " proposes that the dream will be " sweet" if attained. The last simile in line ten, " sags like a heavy load" implies that the dreamer will have a burden if the dream is deferred, it will be so heavy that he/she will not be able to move forward. " Harlem" is a great poem in which the reader can make infinite interpretations of what the author perhaps tries to describe. The use of tone, metaphors and images help us create a wonderful movie in our mind. My personal interpretation is that no matter what, we all have dreams, some of us will try to accomplish them, some will achieve them and others will just postpone them. Dreams deferred might or might not come true, the consequences of a dream defer are immeasurable.