

Analysis of "i, too" written by langston hughes

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



After reading I, Too by Langston Hughes we know the speaker is an African American who is demanding that he will no longer lurk in the shadows of a white man but will be proud and show everyone that he is as equal as any guest invited to the speaker's home. It is clear that the speaker is patriotic, he is growing stronger, and he is confident that "tomorrow" he will be sitting at the home's table for dinner. It can be said that the speaker is either a servant, slave, but more than likely a black man in the Jim Crow South. The home the speaker refers to is not his home nor is it the white man's home; the speaker is actually referring to America. I, Too is comprised of five stanzas, with the first and last stanzas being only one line. That being said the full poem is only 18 lines long and though it seems like a short poem it is a truly impactful poem that carries a strong message.

Though at the beginning of the poem he is not invited to eat at the table for being the "darker brother", the speaker acknowledges his place in the home and eats in the kitchen. This is a common theme during the time of segregation, African Americans were discriminated in all aspects of life. From work, to where they live, and even how they travel, everything was completely separate from white people. However, when the speaker states that "[he], too, can sing America", he is being very patriotic, not only is he feeling this but he is now claiming this patriotic feeling. The speaker is confident that one day the ones who are seated at the "table" will be ashamed of the way they have treated African Americans, and they, too, will be apart of the country, or in this case, be invited to the "table".

The speaker begins to be more optimistic towards the second stanza of the poem. Regardless of the way he has been treated the speaker states, "But I

laugh,/ And eat well,/ And grow strong” showing the reader that he will not be held down and made to feel bad about the color of his skin instead he speaks of happiness, being healthy, and still being capable of becoming stronger both physically and mentally. It is clear the by the last line of the stanza, “ And grow strong” that the speaker is quite the patient and peaceful man. He’s not showing any signs of physically forcing himself at the dinner table because he knows in his heart that one day “ they” will invite him to the table themselves. Acceptance is something that all Americans often take time to learn and the speaker knows his acceptance is right around the corner.

When the speaker says “ Tomorrow” in the third stanza it’s more than likely the author isn’t being literal about tomorrow but instead means in the near future. That being said, the speaker is at a point in the poem where he knows the day is coming soon for acceptance. He will soon be invited to the dinner table when the guests arrive. The speaker is hopeful he will no longer be forced to eat in the kitchen and be hidden away. He is hopeful that one day African Americans will finally be equal to the white people of America.

The fourth stanza is written as an affirmation to African Americans. The beauty of their hard work and sufferings will finally be seen by white people and those people will feel ashamed for how they treated their darker brothers. Not only will African Americans be equal but those that oppressed them for years will finally feel ashamed for what they have done. By the final stanza of the poem, the speaker is declaring his freedom. In the first stanza the reader can assume the speaker is only being patriotic by saying that he “

sings America" now he states he " is, America". By doing so he is refusing to be denied his freedoms and is stating that he is just as important as everyone else.

I, Too has a very powerful message behind it, one that cannot be ignored. This message is that no matter how oppressed one is feeling there is always a light at the end of the tunnel and that a person cannot give up; they must continue to grow strong and make sure those that are oppressing them see the error in their ways. The poem also allowed the reader to get a little bit of insight into the trials and tribulations of African Americans during the time of segregation. It's not a thought to most of us now but for me it definitely hit home. Being an African American now in the 21st century is not very easy so I can only imagine what my ancestors had to go through in the early 20th century and even further into the past. However, now I can confidently say that not only do I sing for America but " I, too, am America".