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Langston Hughes, a well known American poet, was born and raised in mild poverty and faced many struggles during his childhood and early adulthood. Due to the circumstances surrounding his life, Hughes developed a strong emotional connection to anyone facing struggles, particularly youth growing up in poor areas of American cities, such as New York City's Harlem area. After realizing these connections, Hughes was able to successfully address the difficulties of life and the struggles of the people, through the piece "Harlem". The use of a distinct voice, beginning with such a strong title, compels the audience to continue through the poem, where we are exposed to strong use of voice, tone, symbolism, word choice, and poetic structure. The first line in the poem bluntly addresses the audience with a strong voice and asks us the question, "What happens to a dream deferred?" This is one of the most compelling ways the audience is addressed by this poem. What does happen if you lose a dream? Where does that energy, fire, and desire go? What, as humans, are we supposed to do with that void? The loss of a dream is one of the biggest losses a person can experience; it is almost the same as the loss of a loved one because people may form strong, emotional ties to their hopes and ambition (Harlem: Analysis). With this in mind, we can assume the speaker is someone who is trying to cope with loss of their dream. The speaker continues into the poem with more questions that use symbolism to dig deeper into the mind of the audience. The lines continue with, "Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?" With this, a tie to Tennessee William's play, "A Raisin in the Sun," is made. Envisioning a raisin in the sun provokes thought of sweltering heat overcoming a plump grape and turning

it to a darker, tougher, less viable fruit, but also makes us think of the family in William's play (*Harlem: Analysis*). The characters are financially, emotionally, and socially challenged and desire to find their piece of the American Dream. Through this imagery, we begin to fully realize the troubles of the speaker. The poem continues on with, " or festers 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." Key adjectives in these lines include; festering, rotten, sweet, and heavy. These adjectives are used to enhance the symbols they accompany (*Harlem Summary*). The idea of a festering sore is painful and annoying, which brings us to the beginning of addressing the question, " what happens to a dream deferred?" The thought that losing a dream feels painful and agitating is quite plausible and the type of emotion reaction one might feel when they have to give up a goal or ambitious endeavor (*Harlem — A Dream Defferred*). The same goes for " rotten meat," as a lost dream might provoke us to throw the idea away and discard it like we would do with spoiled food. With the lines, " Or crust and sugar over - like a syrupy sweet," losing a dream is compared to the likes of a mess of melted candy or an over-baked crÃ«me brÃ«e; what would have been delicious and enjoyable has now become a sticky catastrophe. "... Sags like a heavy load," also gives off a different adaptation of what the loss of a dream feels like: carrying a damp, heavy knapsack over mountains, feeling the strain of the weight on your body and the unpleasant sensations of the world on your shoulders (*Harlem — A Dream Defferred*). Through all of these descriptions, we are able to see why the speaker is questioning us and begin to wonder what we, ourselves, do with lost dreams and the broken hearts

they create. Sometimes we need to face the harsh reality of our feelings and not be led into a forest full of flowers or the joy of a warm, summer day and Hughes' imagery takes us to that real place, where we aren't pretending, we're just trying to live. We now can see that Hughes' word choice is articulated in a way which brings about strong, definitive images in our mind. His use of short stanza and end rhyme drive the thoughts and points home, because when read, especially aloud, we can hear the beat of the speaker's heart spill across the page. Almost as if recorded as part of a hip-hop song, the short stanzas (with the longest line having only six words) and limited end rhyme use (sun and run, meat and sweet, load and explode are the only rhymes used) alongside such vivid descriptions give us a rhythm to connect to - you don't just read the message, you feel it down in your soul (Harlem: Analysis).. Although it might appear to be short and choppy, the poem surprisingly comes out with a developed and unique flow that has made the poem timeless. Until you read the poem yourself, you won't feel the depth of the words. After you do, the poem will give you newfound enlightenment. It was almost as if the poem was therapeutic (Harlem: Analysis). The poem, being written in 1951, has been felt as a relevant source of refuge for many people at times when most other things from the fifties were far from relevant. Hughes' ability to give so many generations a sanctuary is remarkable: any person who faces adversity and loses hope in the idea that they can achieve their dreams can relate to this poem. Sometimes, all anyone needs is to know that they are not isolated in their feelings. The specific use of voice, tone, symbolism, word choice, and poetic structure in this poem, make " Harlem" a poem which is compelling and striking in

nature. Almost as if a universal message of any sort. People in any country can relate to this poem. By translating it into their language, and being able to relate to it, everyone at some point in their life comes across moments when hope and dreams seem to be lost. Dealing with the idea of " a dream deferred," is difficult, but Hughes makes it feel a little easier for anyone reading this piece because his voice almost makes you feel as if he is a wise grandfather dispensing time-tested advice to you as his troubled grandchild.