

Literature 2.3.1

Literature



What Happens to a Dream Deferred? A “dream deferred” is a personal goal or desire that has to be put aside in order to deal with more urgent and yet more mundane facets of one's daily life. In Hughes' poem, deferred dreams are discussed as if they are a disease or a danger, something that will make you sick and unhappy – an open sore, a dried-up raisin, or even an explosion. However, while this may happen if a goal is put aside due to the pressure of others, choosing to defer your dream until a later time does not always mean that you will become unhappy. While achieving goals is important, it can be just as important to find happiness and fulfillment in your everyday life during this period of waiting.

For example, the book “A Raisin in the Sun” was inspired by this poem, and centered on the lives of a family for whom the mother ignores her dreams in order to focus on raising her family. While a mother should be no less of an individual than any other member of a family, with her own interests and goals that may have nothing to do with raising children, there is plenty of fulfillment to be found in that role. Having to put off her other goals should not necessarily drive a mother to the point of illness or depression that Hughes' poem would suggest.

“Deferment” does not indicate cancellation or permanent destruction; it merely means that the actions of that role will be put off until a later time, as in when the payments on a student loan are deferred. There is a finite period of time that this deferment is intended to exist, and when it ends, things return to their previous course. Loan deferments end and payments resume, children reach the age of majority and begin their own lives, and deferred dreams can live again.