

Name: _____

Hour: _____

LANGSTON HUGHES

Poetry Analysis

Directions: Complete an analysis of two poems by Langston Hughes by following the directions in each section. Have you already read one of these poems? That's great! Dive deeper this time to learn even more. **Due: Thursday, April 20th**

A DREAM DEFERRED:

Quick write: Before reading Langston Hughes' poem, write a paragraph about a time you really wanted something and it was denied. This can be an item you wanted (like a new phone), an activity (like joining a sports team), or a life experience (like a lost loved one). Focus on how you felt when you didn't get what you wanted or had to wait a long time to get it.

Brainstorm:

Background Information:

James Mercer Langston Hughes, (February 1, 1902 – May 22, 1967) is best-known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance. Lauded as the "Poet Laureate of Harlem" in the 1920s, Langston Hughes was one of the first African Americans to earn a living solely as a writer. Hughes was known mainly for his poetry. But he also wrote plays, novels, a wealth of nonfiction pieces, and even an opera.

In his explorations of race, social justice, and African-American culture and art, Hughes' writing vividly captures the political, social, and artistic climates of Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s. During that time in Harlem large numbers of African American workers moved to New York. They came not just for jobs but also to escape the unfairness and obvious and accepted racism of the South. (The South had laws keeping blacks and whites separate allowing whites to have more rights and greater freedom than blacks.)

There were various patrons of the arts during the "Harlem Renaissance," both black and white, including the very wealthy A'Lelia Walker who ran an influential meeting group from her home. Walker paid African-American poets, novelists, musicians, and others so they could create and invent artistically. Three main political figures kept the hopes of freedom for African Americans alive and made Harlem a political hotbed of activities. The three figures were W.E.B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnston, and Marcus Garvey.

Unlike other notable black poets of the period, Hughes refused to separate between his personal experience and the common experience of black America. He wanted to tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including both their suffering and their love of music, laughter, and language itself.

deferred = definition: deferred - To put something off until a later time; Synonyms: postponed, delayed, held back

Read the poem:

Complete the chart below:

A Dream Deferred
by Langston Hughes

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?

	Comparison	Action	Image/feeling created
A dream deferred is like	a raisin in the sun	dried up	dead, shriveled, withered
A dream deferred is like	a sore	fester than _____	
A dream deferred is like	rotten meat		
A dream deferred is like			
A dream deferred is like			
A dream deferred is like			

Answer these questions using complete sentences:

1. What is the message of the poem?
2. How does each comparison show Hughes message?
3. How does Hughes poem connect to the times he lived in?
4. How does his poem connect to your life experience?
5. Which image do you most relate to in your own experience you wrote about?

Now, write your own figurative language poem about when you experienced something being deferred. You can use the format below or create your own completely different format. Attach notebook paper if you create your own format.

A _____ Deferred

by _____

What happens to a _____ deferred?

Does it _____

like a _____?

Or _____ like _____

And then _____?

Does it _____ like _____? Or _____

like _____?

Maybe it just _____ like a _____

Or does it _____?

I, TOO, SING AMERICA:

Putting the poem in context: Hint – look back at the background information section if you need help.

1) This poem is written by Langston Hughes. What do you already know about **Langston Hughes**?

2) This poem and its poet, Langston Hughes, are considered part of the Harlem Renaissance. What do you already know about the **Harlem Renaissance**?

3) This poem is considered a protest poem written to protest the Jim Crow laws. What do you already know about **Jim Crow laws**?

Read the Poem:

I, too, sing America.

*I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.*

*Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.*

*Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--*

I, too, am America.

Answer the questions using complete sentences:

- 1.) Who are the "they" in lines 3 and 16?
- 2.) Using evidence from the poem, make an inference about what usually happens to the speaker "when company comes."
- 3.) What is the speaker thinking/ hoping/ planning will happen the next time company comes?
- 4.) What does the speaker want others to recognize and realize?
- 5.) Explain the significance of the first and last line.
- 6.) Describe the setting you picture for this poem and explain.