

E-Content

American Literature

Semester: III

Lecture 13

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Session 2020-2021



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(Established under Galgotias University Uttar Pradesh Act No. 14 of 2011)

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Course Code : XXXXX

Course Name: Data structures using C

Lecture 13: Langston Hughes: 'Dream Deferred'

Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore--
And then run?

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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?

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Then took the other, just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted
wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

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What Happens To A Dream Deferred? is one of a number of poems Hughes wrote that relates to the lives of African American people in the USA.

- The short poem poses questions about the aspirations of a people and the consequences that might arise if those dreams and hopes don't come to fruition.
- There is an emphasis on poetic device, specifically the simile, where one thing is compared to another using the word *like* or *as*.

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Langston Hughes also wrote novels, stories, essays and articles throughout his career but it's mainly as a poet that he gained recognition. He wanted his poems to reflect the plight of the African American and to give them a voice. Despite some opposition to his work he became a beacon of light for the oppressed.

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He was part of the Harlem Renaissance, an artistic movement of African Americans which played a major role in establishing names during the 1920s and 30s.

Hughes continued to use the influence of street language and vivid imagery in his poetry; *What Happens To A Dream Deferred?* being a prime example.

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Regarding the "sigh" that is mentioned in the last stanza, it may be seen as an expression of regret or of satisfaction. However, there is significance in the difference between what the speaker has just said of the two roads, and what he will say in the future.

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A short, pithy poem that seeks to answer its own question via a series of images and the use of simile and metaphor - figurative language - which puts the emphasis on the imagination.

There are eleven lines with an inconsistent rhyme scheme of **abcdbefeghh**.

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Full end rhymes do tend to glue the lines together and solidify the whole, so *sun/run, meat/sweet, load/explode* reinforce the message and also make it easier to remember.

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Note the use of anaphora, when words are repeated (as in the Old Testament Psalms for example), which also combines with the above rhymes to strengthen the form.

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Reference Page

http://mrsjohnsonenglish1.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/0/5/13053075/magery_poems_worksheet.pdf

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