Harlem: A Dream Deferred

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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?*

Langston Hughes, “Harlem” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1994 by The Estate of Langston Hughes. Reprinted with the permission of Harold Ober Associates Incorporated.

Source: *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (Random House Inc., 1990)

1. Identify the use of imagery for all five senses.
2. Label the poetic devices
3. What is the tone of the poem?
4. How does the sum of all the imagery add up to answering the question put forth by the speaker?
5. Can you connect the final line to events happening today?