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Langston Hughes Center

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Coordinated by

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and African American Studies

Deborah Dandridge, the University of Kansas Libraries, Kenneth
Spencer Research Library, Kansas Collection

Dream Deferred

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 in Memory
and Context:**

**A Program for the Students of The
Barstow School**



January 29, 2010

Kenneth Spencer Research Library

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Program

Kenneth Spencer Research Library

- 9:15 – 9:30 Arrival of Barstow School Students
9:45 – 10:20 Group One: North Gallery, **Shawn Leigh Alexander**
9:45 – 10:20 Group Two: Johnson Room, **Deborah Dandridge**
- 10:25 – 10:50 Group Two: North Gallery, **Shawn Leigh Alexander**
10:25 – 10:50 Group One: Johnson Room, **Deborah Dandridge**
- 11:00 – 11:30 Lunch: Bus or the rotunda in Strong Hall
- 11:30 Depart for the Barstow School

I, Too

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.

About

The Langston Hughes Center

The Langston Hughes Center (formerly the Langston Hughes Resource Center, founded in 1998) is an academic research and educational center that is building upon the legacy and creative and intellectual insight of African American author, poet, playwright, folklorist and social critic, Langston Hughes. The Center coordinates, strengthens and develops teaching, research and outreach activities in African American Studies, and the study of race and culture in American society at the University of Kansas and throughout the region. The Center, therefore, acts as a hub of critical examination of black culture, history, literature, politics, and social relations.

In addition, like Hughes himself, the Center has a Diasporic focus, promoting research and discussions on Africans in the Americas, the Caribbean and Africa. Towards these ends the Langston Hughes Center, will regularly sponsor conferences, lectures, seminars and forums on a wide variety of topics; coordinating activities with other groups at KU and throughout the region.

For more information visit <http://www2.ku.edu/~lhcaas/Home.html>

The Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library

The Kansas Collection is the regional history division of the University of Kansas Libraries. The Collection provides researchers with primary source materials that document the history of Kansas, the region, and the people who have lived here. In order to support teaching and research at the University, and elsewhere, staff of the Collection acquire, preserve, and make available such resources as manuscripts, historical photographs, maps, architectural drawings and blueprints, books, newspapers and other serial publications (e.g., periodicals), film and videotapes that document the "Kansas Experience." The Kansas Collection is also a depository for publications of the state of Kansas and for Douglas County records.

Kansas became a territory in 1854, and a state in 1861. The bulk of the Collection's holdings cover the period from statehood to the present. Materials beyond Kansas include documentation from the contiguous states and the Great Plains generally. Regional representation of agricultural, political and social movements, economic development, and overland trail migration expand both the time frame and types of materials available.

Hughes Poetry

Dream Variations

To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
 Dark like me--
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening . . .
A tall, slim tree . . .
Night coming tenderly
 Black like me

Children's Rhymes

By what sends
The white kids
I ain't sent:
I know I can't
Be President.
What don't bug
Them white kids
Sure bugs me:
We know everybody
Ain't free.

Lies written down
For white folks
Ain't for us a-tall:
Liberty And Justice;
Huh! For All!

Hughes Poetry

Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor?

Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.

So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps.
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.

Don't you fall now?
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Hughes Poetry

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Hughes Poetry

The Weary Blues

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.

Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light

He did a lazy sway . . .

He did a lazy sway . . .

To the tune o' those Weary Blues.

With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.

O Blues!

Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.

Sweet Blues!

Coming from a black man's soul.

O Blues!

In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan--

"Ain't got nobody in all this world,

Ain't got nobody but ma self.

I's gwine to quit ma frownin'

And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more--

"I got the Weary Blues
And I can't be satisfied.

Got the Weary Blues
And can't be satisfied--

I ain't happy no mo'

And I wish that I had died."

And far into the night he crooned that tune.

The stars went out and so did the moon.

The singer stopped playing and went to bed

While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.

He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.