



# Harlem

By Langston Hughes 1902–1967

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?



**By Langston Hughes 1902-1967**

**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.**