**ENG-CC-Harlem**

**Q 1) What kind of dream is referred to here by the poet?**

Ans: The poet refers to the dream of the black community in USA getting equal recognition and rights as a full-fledged citizen of the country; without discrimination on the basis of race and skin colour.

**Q 2) How does the poet compare his dream to a heavy load?**

Ans: The poet focuses on the idea that heavy loads often sag in its place. Using that idea, the poet compares the deferred dream to a load that sags and weighs down the speaker forever reminding him of the hopelessness and the miserable life he lives.

**Q 3) Why does the poet say that his dream is like a ‘sugar coated crust’?**

Ans: He says so because like the sweetness of the sugar-coated crust, the dream of equality that the community aspires for is also sweet in nature. The tragedy is that they never get to taste that sweetness for their dream is always postponed.

**Q 4) In the poem the poet asks what happens to a dream that is deferred. Does he get the answer? What does he want to mean by the expression ‘Or does it explode’?**

Ans: The poet never really finds the exact answer though in his roundabout manner, he puts forwards many considerations of possibilities. A deferred dream with no exact time frame can lead to it being leeched out of motivation or the dreamer falling into a depression haunted by the festering dream. It may become a constant companion with its stinking failure and hold back the speaker from moving on in life by becoming an added burden. By the use of the above quoted phrase, the poet means to signify the desperation that brims up when all hope is lost and the dreams actually shatter to pieces bringing with it a destructive wave of depression, self-loathing, and degeneration.

**Q 5) Write a critical appreciation of the poem Harlem.**

Ans: Harlem is a short lyric poem by Langston Hughes published in his 1951 collection Montage of a Dream Deferred. This poem essentially focuses on the situation of a person whose dreams are postponed to uncertainty. The main theme of the poem is the frustration of the black community in US who managed to get freedom and equal rights but were still treated as second class citizens.

The speaker depicts the situation of a deferred dream, questioning the reader about ho it appears. Furthermore, the speaker then puts up an array of options that might be the possible consequence of the deferred dream. He asks whether it dries up like the tasteless fruits or it ripens like a wound, giving extreme pain. He compares the dream to rotten meat which is rejected and thrown away. As per him, the dream is like a sugar coated crust that can never be turned into reality. In the end he muses that the dream might sink like a heavy weight and disappear but the opposite can happen and it may explode too; bringing desperation and depression along with it.

The poem makes use of negative images and things that are generally thrown away to draw parallels to the deferred dream. The death of a dream is thus portrayed such that it forever remains an unfinished aspect; never to reach fulfillment.

**Q 6) Show how the poem Harlem brings forth the frustration of the black communities of the United States.**

Ans: The poem brings forth the frustration of the black communities by the usage of vibrant and dark images to compare the state of a deferred dream. He compares the state of the dream to a dried raisin that has lost its flavour. The next image he brings up is the dream being compared to a sore that keeps festering and causing pain to the body. In a series of darker consequences, the dream appears like rotten meat, whose stink reminds the despicable agony of failure. He uses an image of the dream being like a sugar coated sweet only for it to be clarified that the sweet never reaches the taste buds of the speaker. Instead, it just sags like a load forever pulling the speaker down with it, finally reaching the ultimate consequence of exploding and bringing with it acute depression and hopelessness. The dream is a forever burden of unfulfilled hopes and broken aspirations.

**Q 7) What is the theme of Harlem?**

Ans: The theme of the poem is the frustration of the black communities of USA who were given freedom and equal rights but were forever treated as second class citizens.

**Q 8) “*What happens to a dream deferred?*”**

**A} Who is the speaker here?**

Ans: The speaker is a frustrated member of the black community of USA.

**B} What dream does the speaker refer to?**

Ans: The speaker refers to the dream of being treated equally as the white Americans in US.

**C} What happens when a dream is deferred?**

Ans: The speaker gives many possibilities where a dream deferred may lose its taste by drying like a fruit, or ripe into a festering sore. It may become like rotten meat or a heavy load always pulling one down. Finally, it may end up exploding; destroying all hope in its wake.

**Q 9) Write a short note on Langston Hughes.**

Ans: Langston Hughes was born in Joplin. He attended Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio where he began writing poetry in 8th grade. Many including his father tried to discourage him into pursuing writing as his career. Hughes was deeply invested in the fate of the black Americans and their treatments at the hands of the white section of the society. The social situation was one of the biggest influences in his writing. He spoke of the ultimate dream of acceptance to achieve which many young Black writers and poets have begun to sacrifice their racial pride in the name of a false sense of integration. The ever growing need to make the whites pleased with them to gain acceptance had corroded the values of their society and culture.

A prolific writer, Hughes wrote 16 books of poems, 2 novels, 3 collections of short stories, 4 volumes of editorial and documentary fiction, 20 plays, 3 autobiographies etc. He also edited a total of seven anthologies.

**Q 10) How are the possible consequences of a “dream deferred” presented through a series of images in the poem Harlem by Hughes?**

Ans: The speaker presents the situation of a postponed dream through a variety of images. He compares the state of the dream to a dried raisin that has lost its flavour. The next image he brings up is the dream being compared to a sore that keeps festering and causing pain to the body. In a series of darker consequences, the dream appears like rotten meat, whose stink reminds the despicable agony of failure. He uses a positive image of the dream being like a sugar coated sweet only for it to be clarified that the sweet never reaches the taste buds of the speaker. Instead, it just sags like a load forever pulling the speaker down with it, finally reaching the ultimate consequence of exploding and bringing with it acute depression and hopelessness.

**Q 11) Explain the following lines:**

***Maybe it just sags***

***Like a heavy load***

***Or does it explode?***

The above quoted lines are taken from the poem Harlem by Langston Hughes. In the poem the speaker questions the reader on the feelings one must go through when a greatly prized dream is continuously deferred. After highlighting various consequences, the speaker ends with these lines stating that maybe the dream sags like a heavy load or ends up exploding into pieces.

By this the speaker wants to indicate that unfulfilled dreams are parasitic in nature that ends up becoming a burden on the shoulders of the speaker who us always bogged down by the weight. Finally, when no end is in sight and all hopes are dashed, the dreams shatter into pieces causing extreme pain and anguish to the individual as all his aspirations crumble around him, destroying his identity and his sense of self.