

As I Grew Older

...when a dream is lost



CONNECT

What is your biggest dream? Share it with the class.

REFLECT

How important is it to dream big? Are people, who aspire bigger in life, more successful?

IMAGINE

You have been saving money to buy yourself something that you have always wanted. But your dream is shattered due to an unexpected event. Share your feelings with the class.

BEFORE YOU READ



Langston Hughes (1902–1967) was an American poet, novelist, playwright and social activist. While in grammar school in Lincoln, he was elected class poet. He wrote his first jazz poem, *When Sue Wears Red*, while he was in high school. His first poetry book, *The Weary Blues*, was published in 1926. He continues to be one of the most prominent poets of America.

As I Grew Older was first published in the year, 1925. It also appeared in Hughes' first poetry book, *The Weary Blues*. Hughes was born when racial discrimination was still prevalent in America. The Afro-Americans didn't enjoy the same civil rights as the people of the majority community did. They didn't get good education and jobs. They were forced to remain on the lowest rung of social ladder. Many people raised their voice against the discrimination. Langston Hughes used his poetry to spread the word against racism.





READ

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.

But it was there then,
In front of me,
Bright like a sun—
My dream.
And then the wall rose,
Rose slowly,
Slowly,
Between me and my dream.
Rose until it touched the sky—
The wall.
Shadow.
I am black.
I lie down in the shadow.
No longer the light of my
dream before me,
Above me.
Only the thick wall.
Only the shadow.
My hands!
My dark hands!
Break through the wall!
Find my dream!



Brainstorm

What is no longer there in front of the poet?

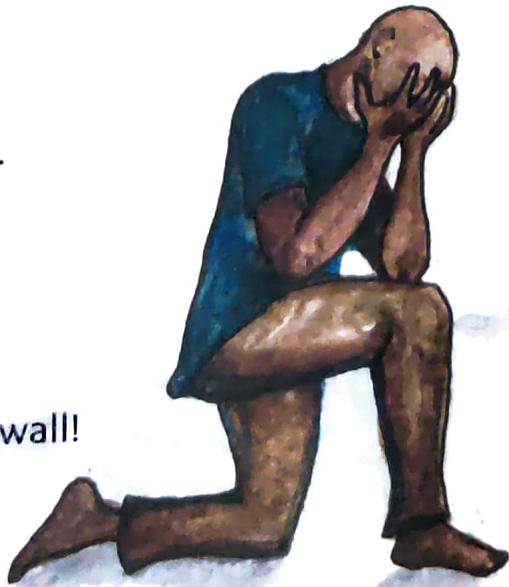
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To smash this night,
To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand **whirling** dreams
Of sun!



Brainstorm

What will the shadow break into?

whirling: moving around quickly in a circle





CONSOLIDATE

A1. Answer these questions.

1. What did the poet have 'a long time ago'? Does he remember it?
2. What has happened to the dream?
3. What change has the poet undergone?
4. What all does the poet want to break, smash and shatter?
5. How does the poet hope to recapture his dream?



A2. Answer these questions with reference to the context.

1. *But it was there then,*

In front of me,

Bright like a sun...

- a. What is 'it' being referred to in the above lines?
- b. Why isn't it 'Bright like a sun' anymore?
- c. What must be done to make 'it' shine again?

2. *Rose slowly,*

Slowly...

- a. What is being referred to in the above lines?
- b. What does it rise between?
- c. When does it stop rising?

3. *I am black.*

- a. Who is the speaker?
- b. Why has the speaker turned black?
- c. Explain the significance of this line vis-à-vis the poem.





A3. Think and answer.

1. Which wall do you think separates the poet from his dream? Elaborate.
2. Is the poem optimistic or pessimistic? How can you tell?

A4. Learn Interesting Terms

Langston Hughes was one of the inventors of **jazz poetry**. A poem that has a jazz-like rhythm is called a jazz poem. In modern times, jazz poetry has evolved into poetry slams.



How does *As I Grew Older* qualify as a jazz poem? Comment.

CREATE

B1. Read these phrases.

- Only the **thick wall**...
- Only the **dark shadow**...



Word World

The words highlighted in the above phrases are adjective-noun collocations.

We have already learnt about adjective-noun collocations.

A combination of words commonly used in a language is called a **collocation**.

When an adjective combines with a noun to form a collocation, the combination is called an **adjective-noun collocation**.

Here are some nouns and adjectives. Pair them to form collocations.

Adjective	Noun
1. famous	a. scholar
2. bright	b. deeds
3. sincere	c. moments
4. dark	d. faculty
5. splendid	e. boy
6. memorable	f. scientist

