



BAL BHARATI PUBLIC SCHOOL, PITAMPURA, DELHI- 110034
SUBJECT- ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE
CLASS- VII

Week-7th – 11th December 2020

No. of Blocks : 3

TOPIC:

As I Grew Older



By Langston Hughes

SUB TOPICS:

- Introduction
- Summary
- Case Study
- Assignment Questions
- Audio Story

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS:

- Presentation by screen-sharing
- MS Word as whiteboard
- Reading and explanation of the poem
- YouTube video

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Each student will be able to:

- Assess the theme of the poem
- Identify: Optimistic v/s pessimistic approach.
- Summarise the poem in a paragraph.
- Research, understand, and use the terms like Civil Rights, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid.

Lesson Development

BLOCK - 1

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

- Following video to be shown followed by Brainstorming.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gmTxc2wGTI>
- Discussion on Racism (Black lives matter) – Afro-American racial discrimination
- Students to collect sample articles, instances, examples on ‘Black Lives matter’ and express their point of view. (Group presentation to be done.)
- Further Reference: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

BLOCK - 2

About the Author

James Mercer Langston Hughes (February 1, 1901 – May 22, 1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from [Joplin, Missouri](#). One of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called [jazz poetry](#), Hughes is best known as a leader of the [Harlem Renaissance](#). He famously wrote about the period that "the Negro was in vogue", which was later paraphrased as "when Harlem was in vogue."

Growing up in a series of Midwestern towns, Hughes became a prolific writer at an early age. He moved to New York City as a young man, where he made his career. He graduated from high school in Cleveland, Ohio and soon began studies at Columbia University in New York City. Although he dropped out, he gained notice from New York publishers, first in The Crisis magazine, and then from book publishers and became known in the creative community in Harlem. He eventually graduated from Lincoln University. In addition to poetry, Hughes wrote plays, and short stories. He also published several non-fiction works. From 1942 to 1962, as the civil rights movement was gaining traction, he wrote an in-depth weekly column in a leading black newspaper, The Chicago Defender.

Reading of the poem and paraphrasing

SUMMARY

The speaker starts by describing a dream he used to have a “long time ago” that he has since nearly forgotten. Back then, however, it was right in front of him, bright like a “sun-dream.” A wall rose up slowly between the speaker and his dream - it rose and rose until it touched the sky. The wall is a shadow.

The speaker proclaims, “I am black.” He lies down in the shadows, which prevent the light of the dream from shining on him. All he can see is the “thick” wall and the shadow.

He cries, “My hands! / My dark hands!” He wants to break through the wall and find his dream; he wants to break apart the darkness and “smash” the night. He wants that shadow to break apart into a “thousand lights of sun” and “a thousand whirling dreams / of sun!”

ANALYSIS

“As I Grew Older” contains a narrative about struggle and empowerment that shares thematic similarities with “Dreams” and “Harlem.” (poems)

In the beginning of the poem, the speaker recalls a dream he had long ago and had nearly forgotten, but now he can see it ahead of him once more. This is fairly straight forward symbolism - the speaker represents all African Americans who had to relinquish their dreams due to the pervasive discrimination and persecution in early 20th century American society. African American children may have experienced a few brief years of blissful ignorance (like the speaker), but they all eventually became aware of their status as second-class citizens - a wall of injustice that rises up to gradually block the sunlight. Just because the wall has risen up, though, it does not mean that the dream ceases to exist - the speaker simply cannot not see it anymore.

Hughes deliberately uses the symbol of a shadow as a way to actualize his character's blackness, because the speaker's race is the barrier that is keeping him from achieving his dream. When the narrator describes lying hidden in the shadows, Hughes invokes Ralph Ellison's depiction of his African American narrator in *Invisible Man* (1952): “I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fibre and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.”

As the poem progresses, though, the speaker's listlessness and apathy turns into determination and vigour, creating a shift of energy. The speaker forcefully commands his “dark hands” to break through the wall so he can access his dream. He is no longer willing to let it languish beyond his grasp.

He wants to “shatter this darkness” and “smash this night.” Hughes uses this violent language to show that the speaker is suddenly empowered and feels no equivocation or anxiety about what he must do.

The concluding image is fantastic, as the speaker imagines the shadow breaking apart into thousands of fragments of sunlight and liberating the “whirling dreams / Of sun!” By confronting the obstacle, the speaker has found his voice and his purpose. This is a potential allusion to the Greek myth of Icarus. Icarus was tantalized by the brilliance and glory of the sun and built himself wax wings to fly there. However, his excitement caused him to fly much too close, his wings melted, and he plummeted into the sea. Although there is a risk inherent in the speaker's decision to shatter the “thick wall,” the largely affirmative tone of the second half of the poem seems to suggest that even if he fails, there is spiritual value in possessing the self-realization to grasp for a dream that might be out of reach.

BLOCK - 3

ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

- Q1. How does the poet hope to recapture his dream?
- Q2. Summarise the poem in a paragraph.
- Q3. Which wall do you think separates the poet from his dream? Assess.
- Q4. Reference to the Context

‘But it was there then,

In front of me, Bright like a Sun...’

- a. *Who is the speaker?*
- b. *What is ‘it’ being referred to?*
- c. *Why isn’t it ‘bright like a sun’?*
- d. *What must be done to make ‘it’ shine?*

AUDIO STORY

Class: 7 (Audio Story Worksheet)

SELVAM AND THE BULL THIEF

General Instructions

- Recall the audio story played in the class while attempting the worksheet.
- Try and remember the new words that you heard in the story, and refer to the dictionary to understand their meanings.

NAME _____ CLASS _____ ROLL NO. _____

Listen to this wonderful story and try to understand the theme, characters, setting, plot and relevance of the situation. Please pay attention to the music, voice modulation and intonation. Let's enjoy the story.

Task 1

Listening Skill

I. The summary of the story is given below in points. But they are not arranged according to the sequence of the story. Rearrange the points in the correct order:

- Every morning Selvam would leave for the field with his Bull.
- Selvam searched for his Bull everywhere but could not find it.
- The man in the red shirt claimed to be the owner of the Bull.
- Selvam decided to buy a Bull from the fair in the town.
- The truth was that the Bull was not blind.
- In a little village in India lived a farmer named Selvam.
- The Bull was missing.
- In the fair, Selvam saw a handsome Bull put on sale.
- Selvam asked the man in the red shirt to tell him in which eye the bull was blind.
- He (Selvam) could not plough his field without his Bull.
- The man first said that the Bull was blind in the right eye and then said that it was blind in his left eye.
- Selvam got his Bull back from the fair without paying any money.
- The man was handed over to the police for stealing the Bull.
- Selvam recognised his Bull in the fair.

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- _____
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- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____
- h. _____
- i. _____
- j. _____
- k. _____
- l. _____
- m. _____
- n. _____

Task-2

Speaking Skill:

Assessment based questions (**Let's discuss**) :

- a) Which event in the story did you find the most interesting? Why?
- b) Assess the role of Selvam as an intelligent and a clever man. Give examples.

Task-3

Think and Answer:

- a) Do you think the title 'Selvam and the Bull Thief' is suitable for the story? Give reasons.

- b) Make a pen portrait of Selvam. Use appropriate adjectives to describe him.
