# Audio file – “Dream Deferred (Harlem)”

[28-Track-28 (1).mp3](https://neagov-my.sharepoint.com/personal/travisd_arts_gov/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/28-Track-28%20%281%29.mp3)

Dana Gioia

Free verse doesn't have the regular beat of metrical poetry, but that doesn't mean that you should read it aloud like prose. You simply have more freedom to pick the words and phrases you want to emphasize. Now, Khandi Alexander recites “Harlem (Dream Deferred)” by Langston Hughes.

Khandi Alexander

 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?