1. **Harlem (Langston Hughes)**

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?

1. **The Negro Speaks of Rivers (Langston Hughes)**

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the

 flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln

 went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy

 bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

1. **I, Too (Langston Hughes)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   |  |

 |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | I, too, sing America.I am the darker brother.They send me to eat in the kitchenWhen company comes,But I laugh,And eat well,And grow strong.Tomorrow,I'll be at the tableWhen company comes.Nobody'll dareSay to me,"Eat in the kitchen,"Then.Besides,They'll see how beautiful I amAnd be ashamed--I, too, am America.  |

 |

1. **The Weary Blues (Langston Hughes)**

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon, I heard a Negro play.Down on Lenox Avenue the other nightBy the pale dull pallor of an old gas light He did a lazy sway . . . He did a lazy sway . . .To the tune o' those Weary Blues.With his ebony hands on each ivory keyHe made that poor piano moan with melody. O Blues!Swaying to and fro on his rickety stoolHe played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool. Sweet Blues!Coming from a black man's soul. O Blues!In a deep song voice with a melancholy toneI heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan-- "Ain't got nobody in all this world, Ain't got nobody but ma self. I's gwine to quit ma frownin' And put ma troubles on the shelf."Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.He played a few chords then he sang some more-- "I got the Weary Blues And I can't be satisfied. Got the Weary Blues And can't be satisfied-- I ain't happy no mo' And I wish that I had died."And far into the night he crooned that tune.The stars went out and so did the moon.The singer stopped playing and went to bedWhile the Weary Blues echoed through his head.He slept like a rock or a man that's dead. |  |

1. **The City (Langston Hughes)**

In the morning the city
Spreads its wings
Making a song
In stone that sings.

In the evening the city
Goes to bed
Hanging lights
Above its head.

1. **If We Must Die (Claude McKay)**

If we must die, let it not be like hogs

Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,

Making their mock at our accursèd lot.

If we must die, O let us nobly die,

So that our precious blood may not be shed

In vain; then even the monsters we defy

Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!

Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,

And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!

What though before us lies the open grave?

Like men we’ll face the murderous, cowardly pack,

Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

1. **Any Human To Another (Countee Cullen)**

The ills I sorrow at
Not me alone
Like an arrow
Pierce to the marrow,
Through the fat
And past the bone.
Your grief and mine
Must intertwine
Like sea and river
Be fused and mingle
Diverse yet single
Forever and forever.

Let no man be so proud
And confident,
To think he is allowed
A little tent
Pitched in a meadow
Of sun and shadow
All his own.

Joy may be shy, unique,
Friendly to a few,
Sorrow never scorned
to speak
To any who
Were false or true.

Your every grief
Like a blade
Shining and unsheathed
Must strike me down.
Of bitter aloes wreathed,
My sorrow must be laid
On your head like a crown.

1. **Storm Ending (Jean Toomer)**

Thunder blossoms gorgeously above our heads,

Great, hollow, bell-like flowers,

Rumbling in the wind,

Stretching clappers to strike our ears . . .

Full-lipped flowers

Bitten by the sun

Bleeding rain

Dripping rain like golden honey—

And the sweet earth flying from the thunder.

1. **A Black Man Talks of Reaping (Arna Bontemps)**

I have sown beside all waters in my day

I planted deep, within my heart the fear

That wind or fowl would take the grain away.

I planted safe against this stark, lean year.

I scattered seed enough to plant the land

In rows from Canada to Mexico

But for my reaping only what the hand

Can hold at once is all that I can show.

Yet what I sowed and what the orchard yields

My brother' sons are gathering stalk and root,

Small wonder then my children glean in fields

They have not sown, and feed on bitter fruits