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Question, What 'dream' might the writer have in mind, given that he calls his poem 'Harlem'?

Harlem is a neighbourhood in upper Manhattan, New York City. It is known to have been inhabited by the African-American people. It is infamous for the "Harlem Renaissance", a political and intellectual movement and revival of the African American culture, which took place in the early 20th century. Langston Hughes too was among the pioneers of this era, he was called the Poet Laureate of the Negro Race. He led the Harlem Renaissance, and was one of the early innovators of Jazz Poetry. His work asked the toughest and most uncomfortable questions about the condition of black people, lower class people and sexual mores, which often times shocked his readers. He experimented a lot in his work and despite all this his work never lost the artistic touch, it was ambitious and beautiful at the same time. Even in this poem, Harlem, he concisely and brilliantly asks "What happens to the dream deferred?", He discusses multiple metaphors and similes which could satisfy his question, but does not give too much emphasis to any of them, in order to maintain the ambiguity. He expects the reader to ask themselves, what happens when ambitions are postponed, and search for an answer of themselves.

He even realises the nature of his reader, who would wonder what kind of dream could Langston the Poet Laureate be talking about? For them he leaves behind the title, "Harlem". He intentionally reminds the readers of his dream, perhaps a dream where black people would be known for more than slavery or their color, a dream where they would be known for their music, their literature, and their culture. Hughes knew that only having equal citizen rights will not be enough for freedom, the community would have to have its

own identity, its own taste and way of thinking. He understood the importance of intellectual freedom for an individual to express and society's acceptance and celebration of such expressions no matter how bizarre they were. This might have been the dream he discusses in the poem, he tells the reader that no matter what happens to a deferred dream it's never in a good state no matter what state it is in, and that the people would have to realise that dream now, it should not be postponed.