**Poem Analysis**

"As I Grew Older,” by Langston Hughes, carries a theme that no matter what stands in the way of someone's dream you can always find your dream and fight for it. Throughout the poem, Hughes refers to **different symbols** to show the barriers between blacks and whites in society.

**In the first stanza** of this poem, Hughes writes that his dream was: “*in front of me, bright like a sun—My dream.”* Hughes’s dream is the dream of a non racist society in America and the freedom for anyone to do what they choose and be treated equally.

At the same time, Hughes’s dream can also be treated as Hughes’s future. Hughes’s dream first appeared to be “*bright like a sun*” because when you’re a child, you aren’t aware of what’s actually happening around you. Children don’t know the true reasons for why their community is the way that it is and Hughes’s didn’t understand it either. Hughes’s dream was bright because he wasn’t old enough to realize that there would be things in his way keeping him from his dream.

**Another reason** why Hughes’s writes “*my dream* "is because Hughes’s dream was different from a white man at the time. Facing discrimination throughout his life, Hughes’s continues to describe racism when Hughes’s writes “*And then a wall rose, rose slowly, slowly, between me and my dream.”* The wall Hughes’s refers to is the wall of white men and how they dominated life in the United States. This wall “slowly” blocked his dream.

**In the third stanza**, Hughes’s writes that the wall “*rose until it touched the sky--*. *The wall. Shadow. I am black. I lie down in the shadow.*” There are many things going on in this stanza that illustrates Hughes’s place in society at that time and the extent of racism.

“The Wall” that Hughes’s describes is a symbol of the white people who were racist against blacks. This wall cast a “shadow” over Hughes and this shadow represents the restrictions and laws that were made in discrimination against black people. Once the shadow is created, Hughes’s writes: “*I am black*,” which is **literally** the current state of his shadowed atmosphere but more so the fact that Hughes’s is African American.

Then he tells the reader that he’s lying down in the shadow. **This shadow** is describing the lower conditions that African Americans had to live with in segregated America. Hughes ends this stanza by saying “*No longer the light of my dream before me, Above me.”* Since his dream is no longer above him, the dream is beneath him. This can be interpreted as saying that **the dream of freedom and equality is unrealistic** or it’s saying that **the dream has been temporarily disabled** because of the wall created by white people. In order to break free of his restrictions, Hughes describes his “*dark hands*” that will be able to “*break through the wall*,” and “*find his dream*. The dark hands Hughes describes is his culture and his own people. His dark hands can be seen as the color of the skin but also the fact that the blacks were enslaved by many whites in the early history of America.

**In the last stanza,** Hughes says that these hands can: *“help me shatter this darkness, to smash this night, to break this shadow into a thousand lights of the sun, into a thousand whirling dreams of sun!”* The darkness is the shadow that was created by the wall that grew taller and taller. Hughes is able to break the darkness and let light in through the wall. The wall stands as Hughes’ opponent and he’s able to defeat it.

Langston Hughes ends his poem by describing the dreams to becoming *“of sun!”* to show the light from the sun is seen by Hughes again and it’s as if he and his dreams were reunited.