

**Tikrit University**

**College of Education for Humanities**

**English Department**

**Introduction to Literature- First Year-2026**

**Lect.Suhad Jasim M.Al-Sammarraie**



## **Literary Analysis of “Dreams”**

**By**

**Langston Hughes**

### **Dreams**

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

### **Biography and Historical Background:**

Langston Hughes (1901-1967) was an Afro-American poet, novelist, playwright and social activist. He is the central poet of the African-American Revolution. He was called the “Poet Laureate of Harlem,” Harlem is the area where the African-Americans live in New York City.

Hughes wrote the poem "**Dreams**" to encourage his friends- the working class of African-Americans in the 1920s - to hold and chase their dreams and hope tightly to achieve equality and live a better life.

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**Form:** This poem is a short lyric.

### **Content:**

**The General Meaning:** This poem is about the importance of dreams in life.

**The Detailed Meaning:** The poem was published in 1923 by the African-American poet Langston Hughes is a short poem of 8 lines with simple imagery but a strong message. It encourages the reader to hold on to their dreams. By "dreams," Hughes means aims, big goals, aspirations, ambitions, and hopes for a person's life rather than dreams at night.

In the first stanza , the poet urges us to catch and follow our dreams tightly because life without dreams motionless just like the broken-winged bird that is unable to fly.

In the second stanza, the poet repeats the same idea by saying that life without dreams is meaningless and fruitless just like a barren field covered and frozen with snow.

### **Theme:**

The poem gives a strong message about the importance of hope, dreams and ambition in life. Life is meaningless, fruitless and impossible without dreams/goals and aims and hope. Man should chase his dreams and try to achieve them to make his life worth living.

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## **The Figures of Speech (The Stylistic Devices)**

### **1-Sound Devices**

**Rhyme Scheme:** the rhyme scheme of this poem is abcb. It is very rhythmic and easy to remember.

**Alliteration** – The repetition of consonant sounds, such as the /b/sound in “*broken-winged bird*.” /d/ in “*dreams die*”. /f/ in *fast, for, fly and field*.

**Assonance** – The repetition of vowel sounds, /o/ in *hold, to, frozen, broken cannot, go and snow*, which creates a musical tone.

**2-Repetition.** He repeats the word dreams five times in the poem. He repeats the line” Hold fast to dreams “two times in order to focus on the importance of dreams. He also repeats the same idea of the first stanza in the second stanza.

**3-Anaphora:** the repetition of the initial words: “For “ and “Life is”.

### **4-Metaphor:**

“*Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.*”

“*Life is a barren field frozen with snow.*”

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**5-Imagery:** Double images are used to make the reader involved with all his senses: Visual and kinesthetic images in: *“Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”*

*Visual and tactile images in: “Life is a barren field frozen with snow.”*

The poet used also sound devices.

**6-Personification:** “dreams die”, “dreams go” .The poet used personification to emphasize the importance of dreams.

**7-Contrast:** There is a contrast between the ideas of life with dreams and life without dreams.

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