CHAPTER THREE

SELF DISCOVERY
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When you set out for Afrika
you did not know you were going.
Because
you did not know you were Afrika.
You did not know the Black continent
that had to be reached
was you [My emphasis]....

She said, your fortune, honey,
Lies right in yourself.
You ain't gonna find it
On nobody else's shelf [My emphasis]....

In the past, any work of art was appreciated in relation to God. It focussed and converged on the Almighty. Literature originated and flourished from an interest in God and matters of religion. With the passage of time, there was a shift from God-centre to man-centre, in other words, to anthropomorphism. Now, in the twentieth century, the human being is given prominence and all problems or issues and in fact, all life-situations are examined in relation to man. The individual with all his desires, predilections, prejudices, biases, attitudes and responses to his environment has attracted attention. He cannot be casually and superficially observed. He demands an indepth scrutiny into his inner self. In the Emersonian sense, all knowledge springs from "self." Hence, it is very important that a person gains self- knowledge and discovers for himself his limitations, strengths and above all his latent powers.


286 Hughes, "Madam and the Fortune Teller," in SPLH, p.211.
In fact, several attempts have been made by psychologists, philosophers and scholars to define "self." Jung considers "self" as the mid point of one's personality, around which all the other systems work. He further observes that "The self is not only the centre but also the whole circumference which embraces both consciousness and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality just as the ego is the centre of the conscious mind." Being the centre and circumference, it holds the systems of the personality together and provides it with unity, stability and equilibrium. The definition of "self" according to the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences runs thus:

A developmental formation in the psychological make up of the individuals, consisting of interrelated attitudes that the individual has acquired in relation to his own body and its parts, to his capacities, and to objects, persons, family, groups, social values, goals and institutions, which define and regulate his relatedness to them in concrete situations and activities....

Again, self, according to A Dictionary of Green Ideas, is as follows:

The individual uniqueness of a person; the person they really are as distinct from the personality they project and the games and roles they play. The idea of "self" is central to most traditions within psychology,... It acknowledges that each person has a real and unique existence which provides a purpose....


A Concise Psychological Dictionary defines "self" thus:

[It is] the result of man's awareness of himself as a separate object in the environment, enabling him to regard himself the subject of his physical and mental states, actions and processes, and emotionally experience his own integrity and identity with himself in relation to his past, present and future....

The human self is multidimensional in character. It is a blend of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves. All these four areas ought to be nurtured and developed simultaneously. But often, one or the other of these four gets neglected and thereby the evolution of the human self is left incomplete. The observation of Erich Fromm illustrates this view:

It is part of the tragedy of the human situation that the development of the self is never completed; even under best conditions only part of man's potentialities is realised. Man always dies before he is fully born....

The human self is a divided self. It is divided into the good self and the bad self, i.e., an angelic self and an animal self. Man has innate goodness and inborn evil in various proportions. St. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, refers to the two laws warring against each other in a person: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." Jung, in his chapter


292 The Bible, Romans, 7:21.
"The discovered self," points out to the existence of evil and good in a man:

... if one can no longer avoid the realization that evil, without man's ever having chosen it, is lodged in human nature itself, then it bestrides the psychological stage as the equal and opposite partner of good....

In the light of the above observations, the transcendental question "Who am I?" gains significance and relevance. Therefore, it is often raised by a person who wants to know himself. To obtain the answer, one needs to have self-perception. In other words, only a person who can understand the good and evil in himself and others will be able to achieve spiritual insight into his own self. According to Freud, this revelation of the angelic self and the animal self within the same person is due to the systems which operate in a personality -- the Id, the Ego and the Superego. The behaviour of a person is always the outcome of an interaction among these three systems. No single system operates on its own.

The Id is the basic and original system which makes the functioning of the Ego and the Superego possible. It is the reservoir of psychic energy. It keeps the level of tension in a person, low and constant.

The Ego is a system whose principal office is to mediate between the instinctual requirements of a person and the conditions of the environment. It controls the actions and decides what instincts of the Id will be satisfied and in what manner. Thus the Ego is dependent on Id for its supply of psychic power and existence.

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The Superego represents the ideal and strives for perfection. It acts according to the moral standards set by the society. All these three systems work as a team in operating a personality. In this context, one makes a note of the differences between Carl Jung and Freud in certain specific details. Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindsey summarize how Jung branches away from Freud:

Human behaviour is conditioned not only by individuals and racial history (causality) but also by aims and aspirations (teleology). Both the past as actuality and the future as potentiality guide one's present behaviour. Jung's view of personality is prospective in the sense that it looks ahead to the person's future line of development and retrospective in the sense that it takes account of the past. To paraphrase Jung, "the person lives by aims as well as by causes." This insistence upon the role of destiny or purpose in human development sets Jung clearly apart from Freud. For Freud, there is only the endless repetition of instinctual themes until death intervenes. For Jung, there is constant and often creative self development, the search for wholeness and completion and the yearning for rebirth....

The spiritual insight into the inner self leads to self-knowledge, which is a continuous process obtained by individual effort. As Jung states, an individual must be adapted to his own inner world and be in harmony with himself. Each individual has a past of his own and a present and should prepare for his future. Acceptance and affirmation of the past are necessary to attain self-knowledge. Jung regards a man modern if he is fully conscious of the present:

The man we call modern, the man who is aware of the immediate present, is by no means the average man. He is rather the man who stands upon a peak, or at the very edge of the world, the abyss of the future before him, above him the

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heavens, and below him the whole of mankind with a history that disappears in primeval mists.... He alone is modern who is fully conscious of the present....

An individual's affirmation of the past, combined with a clear consciousness of the present, will guide and direct him to meet the challenges of the future with courage and confidence.

In the light of the statement that it is important for an individual to have an insight into himself, the Black American poets Brooks and Hughes, who are staunch believers of their race, are studied. They realize the worth of the Black individual, and bring to light his individual uniqueness. They are genuine writers in the sense of Ralph Ellison's observation:

A writer writes out of his own family background, out of his own immediate community, during his formative period. And he writes out of his own talent and his own individual vision. Now if he doesn't, if he tries to get away from that by bending it to some ideological line, then he is depriving the group of its uniqueness. What we need is individuals. If the white society has tried to do anything to us, it has tried to keep us from being individuals....

Brooks and Hughes, through the medium of poetry, try to help the Black man discover and explore his own self. Each person has to do it himself. With a definite and unprejudiced knowledge of his past and present, one must look into himself and perceive the vision of tomorrow, which poets like Brooks and Hughes hold up to him.


The Black self is unique in several respects. By pigmentation and anatomy, he is very much different from others. Physically, a Black is strong, sturdy and brave, marked by the typical traits of his race -- dark skin, kinky and woolly hair, thick lips and a big woolly head. Emotionally, he is sensitive, sentimental, gay and buoyant. Happy or sad, he carries a song on his lips. He is mild, meek, compliant and tractable. He is, by nature, unresisting and unassertive. Spiritually, the Black man has a strong faith in God. He looks upon God as a powerful deliverer from his wretched state, fixes his hope on Him and sings through his sufferings. Intellectually, he has displayed his skill and talents in the fields of fine arts, music and sports. Historically, he is a deep-souled self, hailing from a rich cultural past. In short, he is a bundle of potential traits.

Viewed from various perspectives, the Black self is prismatic in character. By his environmental conditions, and by his economical and educational status, he is an alienatee, and a suffering, downtrodden, rejected and an exploited self.

A Black man is an alienatee. He lives in a hostile environment. His is a world of unpredictable events and uncertainties. He exists in a confined and limited world unsure of himself:

many flowers start, choke, reach up,
want help, get it, do not get it,
rally, bloom, or die on the wasting vine....

The Blacks merely "exist" through the ups and downs of life. The people in Little

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297 Brooks, "In the Mecca," in WGB, p.387.
Rock exist amidst "tight, and small concerns." Brooks details it as below:

In Little Rock the people bear
Babes, and comb and part their hair
And watch the want ads, put repair
To roof and latch. While wheat toast burns
A woman waters multiferns.

Time upholds or overturns
The many, tight, and small concerns.

In Little Rock the people sing
Sunday hymns like anything,
Through Sunday pomp and polishing.

And after testament and tunes,
Some soften Sunday afternoons
With lemon tea and Lorna Doones....²⁹⁸

Such routine life, often results in a feeling of loneliness. The Black man is estranged in a busy world. He is a stranger to himself and others. The alienated feeling overcomes Pete at the zoo when he wonders if the elephant is lonely in his stall, with no one to note his strength:

I wonder if the elephant
Is lonely in his stall.
When all the boys and girls are gone
And there's no shout at all,
And there's no one to stamp before,
No one to note his might.
Does he hunch up, as I do,
Against the dark 'of night?...²⁹⁹

Needless to say, the elephant does not hunch up when it is lonely with no one to note its potential as the Black man does.

²⁹⁹ Brooks, "Pete at the Zoo," in WGB, p.345.
Again, Brooks closely discriminates between loneliness and aloneness to capture the essence of the former and heighten its tone, in her work. **Aloneness:**

Aloneness is different from loneliness. Loneliness means you want somebody. Loneliness means you have not planned to stand somewhere with other people gone. Loneliness never has a bright color. Perhaps it is gray. Loneliness does not have a lovely sound. It has an under buzz. Or it does not have a sound. When it does not have a sound I like it least of all. But aloneness is delicious. Sometimes aloneness is delicious....

Brooks goes on illustrating aloneness with more examples. One fails not to notice a deep sense of longing for love and acceptance throughout **Aloneness.**

Hughes' poems, like those of Brooks, reverberate with a feeling of lonesomeness. The Black man feels dejected and "Lonely/ As the wind / On the Lincoln / Prairies/ Lonely / As a bottle of licker / On a table. / All by itself." The desperate and forlorn feeling is poignantly brought forth by Hughes in "Desert":

Anybody
Better than
Nobody.

In the barren dusk
Even the snake
That spirals Terror on the sand --

Better than nobody
In this lonely
Land....

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301 Hughes, "One," in SPLH, p.92.
302 Hughes, "Desert," in SPLH, p.93.
This estranged feeling often gives rise to negative reactions on the part of the Blacks. The seven pool players in Brooks' "We Real Cool" resort to "dropping out, drinking, debauching, dying," in the words of Melhem. Such meaningless and aimless existence is also echoed by Hughes. A sample is given below:

Work?
I don't have to work.
I don't have to do nothing
but eat, drink, stay black, and die....

Both Brooks and Hughes express the same view when they point out that a Black man experiences loneliness even amidst friends and people. Brooks talks of his "pellmelling loneliness in the center of grouphood" in her Family Pictures. In the same vein, Hughes projects a character who feels abandoned and forsaken in "Crossing":

It was that lonely day, folks,
When I walked all by myself.
My friends was all around me
But it was as if they'd left.
I went up on a mountain
In a high cold wind
And the coat that I was wearing
Was mosquito-netting thin.
I went down in the valley
And I crossed an icy stream
And the water I was crossing
Was no water in a dream
And the shoes I was wearing
No protection for that stream.
Then I stood out on a prairie
And as far as I could see

Wasn't nobody on that prairie
Looked like me.
It was that lonely day, folks,
I walked all by myself:
My friends was right there with me
But was just as if they'd left....

The repetition of the same lines at the beginning and the close of the poem shows his intensified feelings of despair.

Secondly, the Black is a suffering self. Afflictions and distresses are part and parcel of his existence. For centuries, he has been a member of a suffering race, struggling to survive. His physical, emotional and social tribulations amidst slavery and suppression are apparent. Brooks and Hughes present Black-life as it is in reality and so, their poems naturally depict the Blacks' sufferings. Brooks paints their harrowing experience in the form of a parody of Psalm 23:

... The Lord was their shepherd.
Yet did they want.
Joyfully would they have lain in jungles or pastures, walked beside waters. Their gaunt souls were not restored, their souls were banished.
In the shadow valley they feared the evil, whether with or without God. They were comforted by no Rod, no Staff, but flayed by, O besieged by, shot a-plenty. Anointings were of lice. Blood was the spillage of cups. Goodness and mercy should follow them all the days of their death. They should dwell in the house of the Lord forever and, dwelling, save a place for me....

In "The Negro Mother," Hughes renders a vivid picture of the hardships endured by the Blacks during slavery and after. The Black mother narrates it as a story to her children:

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.
Look at my face -- dark as the night --
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the child they stole from the sand
Three hundred years ago in Africa's land.
I am the dark girl who crossed the wide sea
Carrying in my body the seed of the free.
I am the woman who worked in the field
Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.
I am the one who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave --
Children sold away from me, husband sold, too.
No safety, no love, no respect was I due.
Three hundred years in the deepest South:...  

Thirdly, the Black self is a downtrodden self. All his dreams, aspirations, ambitions and desires had been trampled upon and smothered down. Being economically poor and dependent, his status, after liberation, is no better than when he was a slave. He is still psychologically inferior and subordinate. Brooks and Hughes mirror truthfully their downtrodden state in their poems, much to the irritation of the Whites who take advantage of their lowly estate and also to that of some Blacks who want to be "white" in everything they do, say or think.

Lastly, the Black self is a rejected and castaway self. His colour is the chief cause for his rejection. Though the Black man is also rejected by fair-skinned ladies, it

is the Black woman who faces this problem of exclusion more acutely than the man. It is because she is ignored not only by the White but also by the Black man. Brooks herself had undergone the experience of rejection by Whites at school. She recalls:

It was my first experience with many whites around. I wasn't much injured, just left alone. I realized that they were a society apart, and they really made you feel it. None of them would have anything to do with you, aside from some white boy if he "fell in love" with you....

The girl in Brooks' "obituary for a living lady" waits Sunday after Sunday for her man who stopped calling on Sundays. He cannot appreciate her modesty and prefers a girl who is dressed in red to her:

She fell in love with a man who didn't know
That even if she wouldn't let him touch her breasts she was still worth his hours,
Stopped calling Sundays with flowers.
Sunday after Sunday she put on her clean, gay (though white) dress,
Worried the windows. There was so much silence she finally decided that the next time she would say "yes."
But the man had found by then a woman who dressed in red.
My friend spent a hundred weeks or so wishing she were dead....

Rejection by others causes hatred towards one's own self. He underestimates himself and feels ashamed.

Not only in love, but also in other fields, the Black man is disregarded. He cannot sit on a par with a White and enjoy a drink. He is excluded purposefully, deliberately, calculatively and tactfully from the White world. Such social

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rejection, repeatedly meted out to the Black man, causes him to react violently. In the case of young Blacks, their pent up anger and frustration result in brutal behaviour, violence, sexuality and dominance of male power over the females and other weaker men. The Black girls go to the extent of being immodest and wayward. Mary Ann in "Gang Girls," who is portrayed as a rose in a whisky glass, escapes from her confined life by resorting to prostitution. For her "Love's another departure."311

Some girls find compensation for their losses in having premarital relationships as in "Sadie and Maud." Though Sadie stayed at home and had no college education, she "scraped life / With a fine tooth comb."312 She enjoyed every "strand" of her life. She was not ashamed of her life. She drank life to the lees as opposed to her sister. Brooks refers to Sadie's casual reaction to the shame she had brought on the family:

Sadie was one of the livingest chits
In all the land.

Sadie bore two babies
Under her maiden name.
Maud and Ma and Papa
Nearly died of shame.
Everyone but Sadie
Nearly died of shame....313

Hughes has written a poem titled "S-sss-ss-sh" in the same trend. Except the girl who gives birth to a child outside marriage, all the others are embarrassed.

312 Brooks, "Sadie and Maud," in WGB, p.16.
313 Idem.
Rather, she is excited about a life being created anew:

Her great adventure ended  
As great adventures should  
In life being created  
Anew -- and good.

Except the neighbors  
And her mother  
Did not think it good!

Nature has a way  
Of not caring much  
About marriage  
Licenses and such.

But the neighbors  
And her mother  
Cared very much!

The baby came one morning,  
Almost with the sun.

The neighbors --  
And its grandma --  
Were outdone!

But mother and child  
Thought it fun....

The Black self which is thus alienated, suffering, downtrodden and rejected ought to be awakened to awareness and led to discovering its true self. This has been the primary intention of Brooks and Hughes in their literary career -- to shake him out of his state of stupor, subservience and despondency.

Self-discovery is an act or process of achieving an understanding of oneself. It is "becoming aware of one's true potential, character, motives etc," according to Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language. It is a continuous

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process and it cannot be done overnight. It takes time to find out one's own latent potentials, strengths, weaknesses and characteristics. The Dictionary of Green Ideas treats self-discovery synonymously with self-actualization and describes it thus:

Finding, integrating and becoming your SELF. "The process by which a person becomes so sure and self aware has been called by Maslow 'self-actualization.' It means becoming that self which you truly are. It means realizing all of what you have in you to be. It seems clear that there can only be self-actualizing people, probably never any self-actualized people. It seems to be not a state but a process -- a process of continually laying oneself on the line and being open to experience, so that one can genuinely meet it" (John Rowan, 1976)....

From the above detailed definition, one understands that self-discovery is an art which has to be carried out by an individual on his own. He must realize his capabilities and guide them through right and appropriate channels.

It is evident that self-discovery is a significant and consequential step in the life of a Black. Tony Morrison, an eminent Black American artist, traces four stages which a Black writer must pass through:

A period of anger, a period of self-discovery, a period of celebratory use of the culture, and finally an arrival at a conceptual notion of the ethnic experience....

These four stages, though meant for a Black writer, hold good for any Black man. He is already through the first phase of anger and is at the threshold of the next,

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that is, self-discovery. He needs to harness his righteous anger through the ensuing stages successfully. The final stage carries him to heights of transcendental experience -- transcending the fate imagined for him by the Whites. This psychological ascendancy over the present gives him confidence and certitude to meet the challenges of the future.

There are limitless possibilities within oneself. Lorraine Hansberry explains in an interview how an artist imposes on her work, her imagination and possibilities:

Well, naturalism tends to take the world as it is... you simply photograph the garbage can. But in realism... the artist who is creating the realistic work imposes on it not only what is but what is possible [My emphasis]... 318

On another occasion Hansberry observes:

I think that the human race does command its own destiny and that that destiny can eventually embrace the stars.... 319

Brooks and Hughes highlight the possibilities lying latent in an individual and help him fix his goal high. The Black self, thus, can become more than he ever thought possible.

Existential psychology maintains that "Existence is never static; it is always in the process of becoming something new, or transcending itself. The goal is to

318 Lorraine Hansberry, quoted in Anne Cheney, Lorraine Hansberry, p.135.
319 Idem.
become completely human, that is, to fulfil all the possibilities." Corresponding to this view, Aldous Huxley in his essay, "Latent Human Potentialities" states:

... there is the need to grow to the limits of our capacities to actualize our potentialities. We don't have to wait for eternity, necessarily; it is possible, I believe, to become ourselves in the fullest ego-transcending form even in this life. It certainly is worth trying....

Brooks' Maud Martha believes in the possibility of "becoming" her real self in order to develop her personhood:

To create -- a role, a poem, picture, music, a rapture in stone: great. But not for her.

What she wanted was to donate to the world a good Maud Martha. That was the offering, the bit of art, that could not come from any other.

She would polish and hone that....

The literary compositions of Hughes help the Blacks to attempt the impossible and become better. Vinnette Caroll, producer of Hughes' Gospel-song play Black Nativity, points out how "He [Hughes] gave not only to me [Carroll] but to countless other Negroes, a chance to experiment and expand... a chance to be just a little bit better than we had dreamed possible."

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The present intelligence of the Black individual will not suffice to find ways and means to discover himself. It can be done only through mental culturation and through a knowledge of his strengths as well as his weaknesses. He must be equipped with a knowledge of the impediments that bar the way of his progress and success.

Having always looked up to the White as his superior, the Black man had developed a "White is right" attitude. He began to imitate the White in all he did:

In a middle class Black family, "the mother often says 'Don't be like niggers' when the children are bad. A frequent phrase from the father is, "Look how well a white man does things." And so the word white comes to be unconsciously a symbol of all the virtues. It holds for the children beauty, morality and money. The whisper of "I want to be white" runs silently through their minds...." 324

It is this "urge within the race towards whiteness" which is the major hindrance to the progress of the Black artists and the flowering of the Black talents. Hughes calls it the "Racial mountain":

...this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America -- this urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.... 325

Hughes further illustrates how high this racial mountain is barring the way of one's self-discovery. He pictures a typical Black family:

325 Idem.
The family attend a fashionable church where few really colored faces are to be found. And they themselves draw a color line. In the North they go to white theaters and white movies. And in the South they have atleast two cars and a house "like white folks." Nordic manners, Nordic faces, Nordic hair, Nordic art (if any), and an episcopal heaven. A very mountain indeed for the would-be racial artist to climb in order to discover himself and his people [My emphasis]....325

This is precisely why Brooks addresses all sorts of Blacks in "A Primer for Blacks":

All of you --
You proper Blacks
you half-Blacks,
you wish-I-weren't Blacks,
Niggeroes and Niggerenes.
You [My emphasis]....327

Apart from their desire to be "white" in everything, the Blacks encounter several other obstacles which slow down their progress. They suffer from an acute inferiority complex about their colour and physical appearance. A strong sense of their humiliating and bitter past overhangs their conscience.

Their extremely submissive nature is yet again a barrier. They are quick to apologize and willing to compromise. They feel shy in the presence of the Whites. Maud Martha and Paul, who go to a movie in the World Playhouse feel that they are the only coloured people there. They talk in whispers and when the


picture is over, and when the lights reveal them, they "hoped they would meet no cruel eyes. They hoped no one would look intruded upon."328 The porter in Hughes' "Porter" has long been trained to be submissive: "Rich old white man / Owns the world. / Gimme yo' shoes / To shine. / Yes, sir!"329

In addition to this, the Blacks are mostly poor and often jobless. They are helpless and financially dependent. Lack of proper education results in ignorance. They have a stereotyped character stamped on them by their White superiors. The Black man, according to Sterling Brown, is:

...shiftless, lazy, improvident, loud mouthed, flashily dressed Negro with kinky hair and large lips, over addicted to the eating of watermelon and chicken (almost always purloined), and the drinking of gin, the shooting of dice, and the twisting of language into ludicrous malformations -- life was a perennial joke or "breakdown"....330

To cap it all, the Blacks, unfortunately, have no co-operation among themselves. Because most of them hate themselves, they hate their brethren too. This unhealthy attitude towards themselves places them in a state of insecurity, which again impedes their onward march.

Lastly, most of the Blacks lead a "Don't-care-come-what-may" existence. They lead an aimless, goalless, shiftless and restless life, idling, dreaming, revolting, rebelling, rioting and robbing. Such purposeless living is certainly another

328 Brooks, "Maud Martha," in WGB, p.204.
blockade. Not realizing the worth of his life, Timothy contemplates suicide in the beginning of the poem, "The Contemplation of Suicide: The Temptation of Timothy":

One poises, poses, at track, or range, or river,  
Saying, What is the fact of my life, to what do I tend? --  
And is it assured and sweet that I have come, after mazes and robins, after the foodless swallowings and snatchings at fog, to this foppish end?...

The kid in Hughes' "Kid Sleepy" resorts to sleeping to escape the worries and cares of this life:

Listen, Kid Sleepy,  
Don't you want to run around  
To the other side of the house  
Where the shade is?  
It's sunny here  
And your skin'll turn  
A reddish-purple in the sun.

Kid Sleepy said,  
I don't care.

Listen, Kid Sleepy,  
Don't you want to get up  
And go to work down -  
Town somewhere  
To earn enough  
For lunches and car fare?

Kid Sleepy said,  
I don't care.

Or would you rather,  
Kid Sleepy, just  
Stay here?

Rather just
Stay here.... 332

All these obstructions which clog one's pathway towards success may be surmounted only when a Black individual pledges to pass through the several steps involved in the art of self-discovery. Brooks' firm and unwavering belief in the Blacks is worthy of mention in this context:

In spite of all the disappointment and disillusionment and befuddlement out there, I go on believing that the Weak among us will, finally perceive the impressiveness of our numbers, perceive the quality and legitimacy of our essence, and take sufficient, indicated steps toward definition, clarification.... 333

Self-discovery involves four steps. One leads to the other. They are closely interlinked with one another. They are self-knowledge, self-acceptance, self-esteem and self-trust. A Black individual who knows himself is able to accept himself. Self-acceptance leads to self-esteem. All these three steps ultimately help one to have faith in oneself. With the last stage, the Black individual is able to thoroughly discover himself and actualize himself.

Self-knowledge is knowledge of one's own nature, qualities, characteristics, abilities and limitations. In short, it is an insight into oneself. This is the basic requirement of any individual who wants to improve himself. The Black is a highly potent self. In fact, he is endowed with an admirable inner quality of

332 Hughes, "Kid Sleepy," in SPLH, p.126.
333 Brooks, quoted in George E.Kent, A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks, p.252.
resilience. He can survive storms and face odds and dare the wrath of his oppressors. Brooks' "Five Men Against the Theme 'My Name Is Red Hot. Yo Name Ain Doodley Squat'" depicts the five men repeating "We / are thankful/ for steel." Likewise, Hughes' Black mother carried a dream which was like "steel" in her soul.

Incidentally, the Black woman in particular has more capacity for enduring hostility, rejection and desertion. In the fields of art, music and sports, she has unsurpassable talents to her credit. The contribution of the Black woman to the American culture is not minimal or marginal. Brooks herself is an example in the sense that she is the proud recipient of the much coveted Pulitzer Prize in 1950. She is the first Black woman artist to receive the same. George Kent, Brooks' biographer, observes how Brooks became the spokeswoman of American culture on receipt of the Pulitzer Prize:

With the publication of Annie Allen and the receipt of the Pulitzer Prize, Gwendolyn achieved rank both as an artist and as a citizen of the world... for both whites and blacks, Gwendolyn would from now on be tagged "the first Negro to win a Pulitzer Prize," and with that label would come the roles of spokeswoman and arbiter in the upper realms of her city's and her nation's cultural affairs...

In this context, Hughes is proud of relating the Blacks' role in enriching art, not only at the national level but also at the world level:

There is so much richness in Negro humor, so much beauty in black dreams, so much dignity in our struggle... it is our

334 Brooks, "Five Men Against the Theme 'My Name is Red Hot. Yo Name Ain Doodley Squat'," in Beckonings, p.6.
335 George E. Kent, A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks, p.102.
music that has given America its greatest music, our humor that has enriched its entertainment media, our rhythm that has guided its dancing feet from plantation days to the Charleston, the Lindy Hop and currently the Madison.... Our spirituals are sung and loved in the great concert halls of the whole world. Our blues are played from Topeka to Tokyo. Harlem's jive talk delights Hong Kong. Those of our writers who have concerned themselves with our very special problems are translated and read around the world.... So, I would say to young Negro writers, do not be afraid of yourselves. You are the world....

Again, William H. Hansell's observation of Hughes' views on the Blacks' helping America attain its ideals is worth quoting:

Hughes declares that the denial of skills and formal education probably prevented American blacks from producing a Dumas or Pushkin, but they did not prevent the creation of songs which preserved their highest ideals and aspirations. So America as a whole was thereby able to move closer to its ideals because these distinctively American musical forms are as valuable to the national culture as literature....

Self-knowledge does not stop with knowing one's potentials alone. One must know one's drawbacks which impede one's progress and rectify them. Moreover, the Black must know his rights and position in America. The Black soul is not an enslaved one. It is free. Brooks remembers her royal freedom in the past in her "Riders to the Blood-Red Wrath." Her series of recollections only prove their former glory and power. So, she claims her due place in her present position too. Another poem, "People protest in sprawling lightless ways" exemplifies this further:

336 Hughes, quoted in CELH, p.114.
"Be my reviver; be my influence,
My reinstated stimulus, my loyal.
Enable me to give my golds goldly.
To win.
To
Take out a skulk, to put a fortitude in.
Give me my life again, whose right is quite
The charm of porcelain, the vigor of stone." ... 338

Here again, one comes across the speaker's recollecting his former glory when he was able to give his "golds goldly." He claims his right which is the charm of porcelain and the vigour of stone. His right is beautiful and firm. What Brooks highlights ultimately is the Black man's due place and rights in America. Hughes, in a similar vein, proclaims:

Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.
I live here, too.
I want freedom
Just as you.... 339

He further declares that being descendants from the same father, they are to be considered equal to the Whites:

Consider me,
A colored boy,
Once sixteen,
Once five, once three,
Once nobody,
Now me.

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Before me
Papa, mama,
Grandpa, grandma,
So on back
To original
Pa.

(A Capital letter there,
He
Being Mystery.)

Consider me,
Descended also
From the
Mystery....

One fails not to notice the coloured boy's strong faith in himself as he asserts,
"Once nobody,/ Now me " and claims his kinship with Americans.

Knowing oneself in the right perspective leads one to the next step of accepting oneself. And self-acceptance as defined by the Dictionary of Green Ideas is as follows:

Accepting yourself as you are; loving yourself ... it is extremely difficult to love anything or anyone else until you have learned to love yourself, accepting that you don't have to conform to anybody's ideas -- including your own -- about how you should be....

A running parallel is presented by Emerson in "Self Reliance":

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him....

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Self-hate, which is the antithesis of self-acceptance is very much found in the Blacks. It drives some of the Blacks to imitate the Whites. Others resort to self-pity and wallow in despair. Brooks' and Hughes' message for the Blacks is the same. They want the Blacks to accept themselves as they are and not to conform to the standards set by others. The colour problem is the most serious problem with the Blacks because in all other matters -- in their conduct, attitudes and aspirations -- they can emulate the Whites. The dark complexion is a barrier between the Blacks and the Whites. In Brooks' *Maud Martha*, where she exclusively deals with this complex, we find Maud Martha extremely conscious of her colour as a big wall between herself and Paul:

... it's my color that makes him mad, I try to shut my eyes to that, but it's no good. What I am inside, what is really me, he likes okay. But he keeps looking at my color, which is like a wall. He has to jump over it in order to meet and touch what I've got for him. He has to jump away up high in order to see it. He gets awful tired of all that jumping....  

Here, one understands that Paul and Maud Martha very well "know" what Maud really is beneath her dark skin; but it is difficult for them to accept her colour as part of her goodness. Maud, on another occasion fantasies:

.... Pretty would be a little cream-colored thing with curly hair. Or at the very lowest pretty would be a little curly-haired thing the color of cocoa with a lot of milk in it. Whereas, I am the color of cocoa straight,...

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344 Ibid., p.179.
Paul, a representative of the Black men, equally lacks self-acceptance and estimates himself low when they discuss marriage and giving birth to children:

"... my features aren't fine. They aren't regular. They're heavy. They're real Negro features. I'm light, or at least I can claim to be a sort of low-toned yellow, and my hair has a teeny crimp. But even so I'm not handsome."

No, there would be little "beauty" getting born out of such a union....

Brooks voices her self-acceptance in the inscription of the poem "The Sermon on the Warpland," attributed to Ron Karenga:

"The fact that we are black is our ultimate reality"....

Brooks beautifully delineates self-acceptance through little Lincoln West in "The Life of Lincoln West." He gains a new awareness of his self which leads to accepting himself. When pointed out by the White man as "one of the best / examples of the specie" -- "the real thing" -- he feels happy and comforted:

When he was hurt, too much stared at --
too much
left alone -- he thought about that. He told himself "After all, I'm the real thing."
It comforted him....

Like Brooks, Hughes does not stop with accepting himself. He wants others to take him as he really is:

My old mule,
He's got a grin on his face.
He's been a mule so long
He's forgot about his race.

I'm like that old mule --
Black -- and don't give a damn!
You got to take me
Like I am....

Another instance of Brooks' accepting herself is seen in "An Aspect of Love," where Brooks compliments the self-accepting man:

You rise. Although
genial, you are in yourself again.
I observe
your direct and respectable stride.
You are direct and self-accepting as a lion
in African velvet. You are level, lean,
remote....

This is precisely why E.E.Cummings strongly maintains that "in acceptance is joy."

Hughes is unashamed to face reality when he acknowledges that they are beautiful and ugly simultaneously: "We know we are beautiful. And ugly too." He appreciates the common and low-down-folks, who, unlike the upper and

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middle class Blacks accept themselves: "And they accept what beauty is their own without question."  

Hughes' "Argument" shows that though black is considered with contempt, it is fine. He openly acknowledges it to be his:

White is right,
Yellow mellow,
Black, get back!

Do you believe that, Jack?

Sure do!

Then you're a dope
for which there ain't no hope.
Black is fine!
And, God knows,
It's mine!...  

George Kent quotes Brooks' regret and disapproval of a woman who wrote on her job application, "I've Negroid features, but they're finely spaced": "Oh, how much better if it had been phrased / "I've Negroid features -- and they're finely spaced."  

Hughes equally expresses his regret when he refers to the Black artist who is "never taught to see that beauty [of his own people]. He is taught rather not to see it, or if he does, to be ashamed of it when it is not according to Caucasian patterns."

The hue and physical features of a race should not be the determining factors of the Black lives. They must be accepted as they are. Tony Morrison's observation is relevant in this context:

354 Brooks, quoted in George E.Kent, A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks, p.36.
When the strength of a race depends on its beauty, when the focus is turned to how one looks, as opposed to what one is, we are in trouble... the concept of physical beauty as a virtue, is one of the most pernicious and destructive ideas of the Western world, and we should have nothing to do with it....

The physical features are the gifts of God endowed on the Blacks and ingrained in their blood. They cannot run away from their African blood and slave past. But affirmation of the same helps them derive strength and sustenance to live the present and prepare for future.

Jung said to a group of ministers in 1932 how important this virtue of accepting oneself is and ended the statement with a question of significance:

We cannot change anything unless we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses. Acceptance of oneself is the essence of the moral problem and the acid test of one's whole outlook on life. That I feed the beggar, that I forgive an insult, that I love my enemy in the name of Christ -- all these are undoubtedly great virtues ... But what if I should discover that the least among them all, the poorest of all the beggars, the most impudent of all offenders, yes, the very fiend himself -- that these are in me, and I myself stand in need of the alms of my own kindness, that I myself am the enemy who must be loved -- what then?...

The next step in the process of self-discovery is esteeming oneself. Knowledge and acceptance must lead to respecting and regarding oneself for what he is. If self-knowledge is work done beneath the surface by unravelling one's abilities, self-acceptance is done on the ground level by meeting the reality and facing it...

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and self-esteem is done by building positively on the ground. Brooks and Hughes, being artists filled with self-esteem themselves, help the Blacks to build their esteem by degrees. What is worthy of estimation is also worthy of celebration. So, these poets inspire the Blacks to celebrate and delight in their singular endowments and achievements.

Brooks feels that every Black who bears himself with esteem and dignity will become a lesson to his onlookers to learn from:

Every Negro poet has "something to say." Simply because he is a Negro, he cannot escape having important things to say. His mere body, for that matter, is an eloquence. His quiet walk down the street is a speech to the people. Is a rebuke, is a plea, is a school....

She expresses her expectation from a Black in the following lines:

I came expecting
the strong young --
up of head, severe,
not drowsy, not-in-bitten,
not outwitted by the wiles of history....

"A Brown Girl" is yet another poem in the same trend. Amidst the Blacks who walk "hesitant, wonderingly, / or cockily, with false nonchalance," this tall
brown girl is an exception. Brooks exclaims:

How high and fine her head,  
Her mouth, how firm; her eyes how cool;  
How straight and strong her tread:  
As if to say, 'I have no fear'....

Commenting on this poem, Kent observes, "Growing in her [Brooks] ... was a racial pride for those who walked sturdily, and rebuke for those who did not appreciate blacks, including blacks themselves." A running parallel that corresponds to the above can be detected in Mari Evans:

I  
am a black woman  
tall as a cypress  
strong.  
beyond all definition still  
defying place  
and time  
and circumstance  
assailed  
impervious  
indestructible  
Look  
on me and be  
renewed....

Soon after her strong conviction in Black solidarity in 1967, Brooks found pride in wearing her natural kinky hair as a woolly cap, without any more fussing with hair straightening hot combs. She celebrates the "richrough" hair of the Black

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362 George E. Kent, A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks, p.36.

women in "To Those of My Sisters Who Kept Their Naturals" and adds:

The natural Respect of Self and Seal!  
Sisters!  
Your hair is Celebration in the world!... 

When confronted with a question on how she felt when Blacks again resorted to hair-straightening, Brooks responded with sorrow and vehemence:

... It just seemed a deliberate self slap in the face. They all look -- and I don't mind saying it -- they all look UN-NATURAL to me. Now of course those who just naturally have unnatural hair can't help that. Now, I may seem to be giving too much attention to that but I believe that it's a symbol of where we are now, that we have so little pride as to feel that other people's hair is more beautiful than ours and to deliberately go out and imitate it. That nice togethery-ness that was developing, a lot of us are losing. Once again we're emphasizing the individual, loving self above the group....

In The Tiger Who Wore White Gloves or What you are you are, Brooks draws the tiger as a symbol of self-esteem and pride. Melhem interprets that "The strength of the tiger accompanies his stripes, emblem of the lash, while his toenails extrude through the gloves. The theme is self-acceptance and pride." As the title itself suggests the tiger is what it is. Brooks writes:

IT'S NATURE'S  
NICE DECREE  
THAT TIGERFOLK  
SHOULD BE

NOT DAINTY
BUT DARING
AND WISELY WEARING
WHAT'S FIERCE AS THE FACE.
NOT WHITENESS AND LACE !... 367

It will be odd if a tiger is dainty instead of daring. It is proud of its god-given attributes and characteristics. Melhem, commenting on those lines, points out that "Living creatures must develop their attributes and esteem them: the tiger qua tiger; the human qua human." 368

"Black" as a colour and race has been owned by Brooks throughout her poetry. She calls it "Our Black." Brooks uses "Black" as an adjective for a number of meaningful terms. They are black volume, black total, black heroohood, black time, black revival, black vinegar, black love, black nation, black solidarity, etc. In fact, Brooks has always enjoyed being a Black. She acquaints one of her feelings about being Black:

...almost secretly, I had always felt that to be Black was good. Sometimes, there would be an approximate whisper around me: others felt, it seemed, that to be Black was good. The translation would have been something like "Hey -- being Black is fun." Or something like "Hey -- our folks have got stuff to be proud of!" Or something like "Hey -- since we are good why aren't we treated like the other 'Americans'?" ... 369

Her pride and joy in being a Black takes her to the extent of claiming a holiday


368 Idem.

for Blacks everywhere to celebrate a Black World Day:

Yes, needed is a holiday for Blacks everywhere, a Black World Day, with Black excitement and Black trimmings in honor of the astounding strength and achievement of Black people....

She envisions the celebration which reflects their African taste, trend and traditions:

I see, feel and hear a potential celebration as Africa colors -- thorough, direct. A thing of shout but of African quietness, too, because in Africa these tonals can almost coincide. A clean-throated singing. Drums; and perhaps guitars. Flags or a flag. Costumery. Wholesomely gaudy; costumery which, for the African, is not affectation but merely a right richness that the body deserves. Foods; not pâté de Foie gras or creamed lobster de bon bon, but figs and oranges, and vegetables.... AND the profound and frequent shaking of hands, which in Africa is so important....

Like Brooks, Hughes has always enjoyed and rejoiced in being a Black. He never feels inferior being a Black and esteems himself for what he is. For Hughes, it is never Black but beautiful, but Black and beautiful. He owns Black people as his own and sings of their physical as well as inner beauty:

The night is beautiful,  
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,  
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people....


371 Idem.

Another poem "Ardella" praises the dark girl and injects self-esteem in her:

I would liken you
To a night without stars
Were it not for your eyes.
I would liken you
To a sleep without dreams
Were it not for your songs....

Hughes gives various names and uses different phrases to sing a lullaby for a little Black baby. He calls it "My dark body's baby," "Night-black baby," and "My little earth thing" and invokes the moon and stars to sing lullaby:

Oh, little dark baby,
Night black baby,
Stars, stars,
Moon,
Night stars,
Moon,

For your sleep-song-lullaby!...

The association of the dark baby with night, moon and stars gives much significance to the coloured race and elevates it.

Hughes is again proud of the "Harlem Sweeties" of various shades and calls them a rainbow:

Caramel, brown sugar,
A chocolate treat.
Molasses taffy,
Coffee and cream,
Licorice, clove, cinnamon
To a honey-brown dream.

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* Hereafter referred to as DK.
Ginger, wine-gold,  
Persimmon, blackberry,  
All through the spectrum  
Harlem girls vary --  
So if you want to know beauty's  
Rainbow-sweet thrill,  
Stroll down luscious,  
Delicious, fine Sugar Hill....  

Thus, Hughes helps Harlem girls to regard themselves as part of a rainbow which again elevates them to cosmic association.

Another poem by Hughes entitled "Young Negro Girl" highlights the beauty of the Black girl:

You are like a warm dark dusk  
In the middle of June-time  
When the first violets  
Have almost forgotten their names  
And the deep red roses bloom.

You are like a warm dark dusk  
In the middle of June-time  
Before the hot nights of summer  
Burn white with stars....

Hughes strikes clear the fact that black is beautiful and warm. The phrases "warm dark dusk" and "burn white with stars" are meant to strike a contrast between the colours: the former warm and inviting and the latter burning and undesirable.

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Like Brooks who wants to celebrate Blackness, Hughes wants to celebrate the launch of the Blacks' "Freedom Train":

And nary a sign of a color line --
For the Freedom Train will be yours and mine!...  

Again, like Brooks who scorned the ladies who did hairstaightening, Hughes expresses his disdain for the Black artists, who, lacking self-esteem, want to imitate the White standards:

... I am ashamed for the black poet who says, "I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet," as though his own racial world were not as interesting as any other world. I am ashamed, too, for the colored artist who runs from the painting of Negro faces to the painting of sunsets after the manner of the academicians because he fears the strange unwhiteness of his own features. An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must also never be afraid to do what he might choose....  

Hughes has confidence in being respected and recognized in their country:

But someday somebody'll
Stand up and talk about me,
And write about me --
Black and beautiful--
And sing about me,
And put on plays about me!
I reckon it'll be
Me myself!

Yes, it'll be me....

---

377 Hughes, "Freedom Train," in SPLH, p.278.
Thus, filled with self-esteem, these poets lead the Blacks to respect and love themselves. Brooks expresses her view on her work Primer for Blacks to Melhem:

I like what the poems say.... They say what I mean. It is an insistence that Blacks have some gumption about themselves, and that they like themselves and stop imitating whites....

Hughes appreciates the poor Blacks who "still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations" and esteem their culture as their own: "Their joy runs, bang! into ecstasy. Their religion soars to a shout. Work may be a little today, rest a little tomorrow. Play awhile. Sing awhile. O, let's dance!" This description of Hughes in keeps with Brooks' wish to celebrate Blackness with African dance, shout, food, colours etc. One who prizes and values his own self is able to regard others too. Joshua Loth Leibman stresses the need for self-esteem:

He who hates himself, who does not have a proper regard for his own capacities ... can have no respect for others. Deep within himself he will hate his brothers when he sees in them his own marred image. Love for oneself is the foundation of a brotherly society and personal peace of mind....

Brooks and Hughes want to drive home the truth that self-regard, when extended to their fellowmen as love for others, will very much improve the present

382 Idem.
condition of the Blacks. That is why Brooks chants:

... we are each other's
harvest:
we are each other's
business:
we are each other's
magnitude and bond....

In an interview with Gloria T. Hull, Brooks laments the lack of love among Blacks and expresses her hope about their future:

... warmth among blacks is a positive; hatred among blacks is a negative. A lot of us hate ourselves. We're going off in this direction or that direction and we're doing everything except (I don't care how mushy it sounds), loving each other. We want to be like the big white man on Park Avenue. However, I see signs that blacks are turning toward each other and beginning to continue a belief in themselves and in their future....

Hughes expresses his love for his own people through his Simple-stories:

I didn't come here to Harlem to get away from my people. I came here because there's more of 'em.... I love my people....

The last but the most significant step in the process of self-discovery is that of trusting oneself. The process of self-discovery culminates in self-trust. And self-trust means having faith in oneself and having courage and determination to face any situation in life. This moral strength is an inbuilt mechanism in any

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385 Brooks, UPO, p.25.
individual, which ought to be nurtured and allowed to grow. Brooks, in one of her early poems, sings of the triumph of the soul:

Is not the soul triumphant at last?
I'll rise again... 

She further points out to the power of the human spirit which can either make one or mar one:

There is no spirit that can bring you down,
Except your own.
Your ruination shall be no man's frown
Except your own...

In the same trend, Hughes writes about the Black individual and his determination in "Freedom's Plow":

When a man starts out with nothing,
When a man starts out with his hands
Empty, but clean,
When a man starts out to build a world,
He starts first with himself
And the faith that is in his heart --
The strength there,
The will there to build...

Here, one notes how Hughes uses the terms faith, strength and will synonymously.

The Blacks have a fine and admirable model worthy of emulation in their Black liberator, Martin Luther King who possessed the strength of mind which these

387 Brooks, quoted in George E. Kent, A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks, p.38.
388 Ibid., p.30.
poets talk of. His voice rang out through America: "We may be black; we may be poor; yet we can be somebody."\(^{390}\) His memorable speech on acceptance of his Nobel Prize for Peace declares his abiding faith and belief:

I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, other-centred can build up. I still believe that one day mankind will bow down before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed and non-violent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land. "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid." I still believe that we shall overcome....\(^{391}\)

King could face any amount of wrath, injustice and trial. His strong faith and determination had its root in God. He had the courage which King David speaks of in the book of Psalms:

\[
\text{...by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.}\]\(^{392}\)

\[
\text{Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.}\]\(^{393}\)

\[
\text{Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;...}\]\(^{394}\)

Such deep rooted faith in God and confidence in himself helped King to lead the marches and boycotts single-handed.


\(^{391}\) Ibid., pp. 38-39.

\(^{392}\) The Bible, Psalms, 18:29.

\(^{393}\) The Bible, Psalms, 27:3.

\(^{394}\) The Bible, Psalms, 23:4.
Brooks and Hughes have presented men of determination and faith in their enduring poetry. They acknowledge the commitment of the men with pride. Brooks' "The Leaders" depicts the vision of the leaders:

They cancel, cure and curry.
Hardly the dupes of the downtown thing
the cold bonbon,
the rhinestone thing, And hardly
in a hurry.
Hardly Belafonte, King,
Black Jesus, Stokely, Malcolm X or Rap.
Bungled trophies.
Their country is a Nation on no map....

Brooks focuses particularly on the "manhood" or the "maleness" of Malcolm X, the assassinated Black Muslim leader:

Original.
Ragged-round
Rich-robust.
He had the hawk-man's eyes.
We gasped. We saw the maleness.
The maleness raking out and making guttural the air
and pushing us to walls....

And Hughes presents the picture of John Brown, the martyr who laid down his life for his people, in "October 16." It should be remembered that Hughes' grandmother was the widow of young Lewis Sheridan Leary, one of the five Blacks who fought and died with John Brown at Harpers Ferry:

Perhaps
You will remember
John Brown.

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John Brown
Who took his gun,
Took twenty-one companions
White and black,
Went to shoot your way to freedom
Where two rivers meet.

And the hills of the
North
And the hills of the
South
Look slow at one another --
And died
For your sake.

Now that you are
Many years free,
And the echo of the Civil War
Has passed away,
And Brown himself
Has long been tried at law,
Hanged by the neck,
And buried in the ground --
Since Harpers Ferry
Is alive with ghosts today,
Immortal raiders
Come again to town --

Perhaps
You will recall
John Brown....

Every individual is gifted with such moral calibre in different degrees. It can be utilized in its fullness only when the underlying fear within an individual is overcome. Martin Luther King's biographer, George Kaitholil summarizes King's views on the fear within the race:

... normal fear protects and abnormal fear paralyses. Normal fear motivates us to improve our individual and collective welfare, abnormal fear constantly poisons and destroys our

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397 Hughes, "October 16," in SPLH, p.10.
inner lives. Our problem is not to be rid of fear but rather to
harness and master it. By looking squarely and honestly at
our fears, we can learn that many of them are residues of
some childhood need and apprehension. Secondly, we can
master fear through one of the supreme virtues known to man:
Courage. Fear is also mastered by love and faith, by facing
the tensions of life with adequate spiritual resources
[My emphasis]....

Brooks traces the reasons for this unnecessary fear in her Black brothers and also
gives the solution to overcome it in the poem "Leftist Orator in Washington Park
Pleasantly Punishes the Gropers":

Poor Pale-eyed, thrice-gulpin Amazed.
It is white and rushed here, this is a crazy snow.
I am afraid the wind will not falter at any time in the night.
I know you are frightened and I know
You know not where to go.

I foretell the heat and yawn of eye and the drop of the
mouth and the screech,
The foolish, unhappy screech hanging high on the air.

Because you had no dream or belief or reach.
Because you could only beseech.

Because you were nothing, saw nothing, did nothing at all.
Because there will be No Thing for which you fall....

The point here is, the Blacks should set a goal in life and try to achieve the same
instead of being afraid. Like Medgar Evers, who resolved to fear no further, the
Blacks should train themselves to be bold, determined and unafraid. Brooks' poem
"do not be afraid of no" gives an example of a girl who ought to say no to
an immoral life without any fear:

To say yes is to die
A lot or a little. The dead wear capably their wry

398 George Kaitholil, Martin Luther King, p.52.
399 Brooks, "Leftist Orator in Washington Park Pleasantly Punishes the
Enameled emblems. They smell.
But that and that they do not altogether yell is all that we know well.

It is brave to be involved,
To be not fearful to be unresolved,

Her new wish was to smile
When answers took no airships, walked a while....

Like Brooks, Hughes characterizes his *personae* as walkers with the dawn and presents them fearless and unapprehensive:

Being walkers with the dawn and morning,
Walkers with the sun and morning,
We are not afraid of night,
Nor days of gloom,
Nor darkness --
Being walkers with the sun and morning....

With the "fear" overcome, an individual finds it easy to be as determined as ever to claim his rights. Brooks advises the Black boys to develop faith and self-trust and also warns them of the obstacles on the way:

And boys,
Young brothers, young brothers --
beware the imitation coronations.
Beware
the courteous paper of kingly compliments.

Beware
the easy griefs.

I tell you
I love You

---

400 Brooks, "do not be afraid of no," in *WGB*, pp.76-77.

401 Hughes, "Walkers with the Dawn," in *DK*, p.63.
and I trust You.
Take my Faith.
Make of my Faith an engine.\textsuperscript{402}

These lines do depict Brooks' own faith in herself which she wants the youth to partake of. Hughes is also a staunch believer in himself and his work, as Arthur P. Davis observes:

\begin{quote}
Mr. Hughes was, I [Arthur P. Davis] believe, the most independent person I have known. His independence stemmed, like his coolness from a strong belief in himself and in his work. He was not arrogant, but he possessed to a great degree the kind of creative egotism that every successful artist must have...\textsuperscript{403}
\end{quote}

Hughes' characters are also as independent as himself, having trust in themselves. For example, the sailor in "Young Sailor" carries his own strength. He enjoys life to the lees, having confidence in himself and in his future:

\begin{quote}
He carries
His own strength
And his own laughter,
His own today
And his own hereafter --
This strong young sailor
Of the wide seas.

What is money for?
To spend, he says.
And wine?

To drink.
And women?
To love.
And today?
\end{quote}


For joy.  
And the green sea  
For strength,  
And the brown land  
For laughter.  

And nothing hereafter....  

Brooks has created many individual characters with might of mind, strength of will and steel. Rudolph Reed, his wife, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, the old tennis player and the weaponed woman are some of them. Rudolph Reed and his wife are both "oaken" and their children "oakened" as they grow. When his wife loses Rudolph Reed, she never reacts violently or cowardly. She squarely faces life:

Small Mabel whimpered all night long,  
For calling herself the cause.  
Her oak-eyed mother did no thing  
But change the bloody gauze....  

Medgar Evers is prepared for "better birth or / a final death." With his Black strength, Malcolm X provides an opening to selfhood:

He opened us --  
who was a key,  
who was a man....  

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404 Hughes, "Young Sailor," in SPLH, p.73.  
The old tennis player, filled with resolution, leans forward to struggle, fight and continue to live:

Refuses
To refuse the racket, to mutter No to the net.
He leans to life, conspires to give and get
Other serving yet....

Though life has been baffling and difficult, the weaponed woman fights, as she has always fought, according to her lights. In other words, she fights life according to her understanding of life. Her weapons are very simple -- her semifolded arms, her strong bag and the stiff frost on her face -- but they symbolize her firmness of mind, fortitude and patient endurance. She is able to challenge and meet "When" and "If" -- the possibilities of life:

Well, life has been a baffled vehicle
And baffling. But she fights, and
Has fought, according to her lights and
The lenience of her whirling-place.

She fights with semi-folded arms,
Her strong bag, and the stiff
Frost of her face (that challenges "When" and "If.")
And altogether she does Rather Well....

Like Brooks, Hughes has created distinguished characters like Jesse B.Simple, Madam Alberta K. Johnson, the Negro mother and so on, who are symbols of self dignity, moral courage and strong will. Madam is not a woman who easily gives in to thoughts of death. She dares to encounter death and exhibits her strong

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408 Brooks, "old tennis player," in SP, p.125.
Her determination to survive and live rewards her; she becomes alright that the doctor advises her to have a diet of chicken, to which she responds with cheer:

... Better buy two --
Cause I'm still here kickin'!...\(^\text{411}\)

Again, Madam never budges an inch when the census man tries to alter her name, or when the minister, Reverend Butler, tries to convict her of her sin, or when the rent man gets displeased with her refusal to pay the rent. Her answers to these people are curt, sharp and witty. When she enumerates the bad conditions of the house, the rent man tries to escape saying that he is just an agent. Madam's response is quick and abrupt, charged with unyielding resolve:

I said, Naturally,
You pass the buck.
If it's money you want
You're out of luck.

\(^\text{410}\) Hughes, "Madam and the Wrong Visitor," in SPLH, p.212.

\(^\text{411}\) Idem.
He said, Madam,
I ain't pleased!
I said, Neither am I.
So we agrees!...\textsuperscript{412}

Hughes delineates the character of Simple as a representative of the Black community. Like Madam, Simple has a ready and witty answer to any question. The conversations between Straight man and Simple are examples to this. The following is one of the many examples:

"Getting married," said Simple, "is also a equal right."
"You do not want to marry a white woman, do you?" I asked.
"I do not," said Simple, "but I figure some white woman might want to marry me"...\textsuperscript{413}

On another occasion, Simple expresses his courage to remain what he is, unashamed of his tastes and inclinations:

"What I like, I like and I do not care who knows it. I also like watermelon."
"Why not?" I asked.
"Some colored folks are ashamed to like watermelon. I told you about that woman who bought one in the store once and made the clerk wrap it up before she would carry it home. She didn't want nobody to see her with a watermelon. Me, I would carry a watermelon unwrapped anyday anywhere. I would eat one before the Queen of England"...\textsuperscript{414}

The stoic "Negro mother" is a symbol of dignity and courage. She narrates to her children the story of how she "nourished the dream that nothing could smother

\textsuperscript{412} Hughes, "Madam and the Rent Man," in SPLH, pp.204-205.
\textsuperscript{413} Hughes, "Race Relations," in LHR, p.193.
\textsuperscript{414} Hughes, "Fancy Free," in LHR, p.198.
deep in my breast."\textsuperscript{415} Though deprived of her land, children and relatives, she did not falter or faint. She never lost her courage and vision. She kept on trudging through the lonely years. Now she has her dreams fulfilled and realized through her children:

\begin{verbatim}

Sometimes, the valley was filled with tears,  
But I kept trudging on through the lonely years.  
Sometimes, the road was hot with sun,  
But I had to keep on till my work was done:  
I had to keep on! No stopping for me....\textsuperscript{416}

\end{verbatim}

Thus, Brooks and Hughes have created models worthy of emulation.

Self-trust, coupled with determination and an optimistic view of life, goes a long way in helping the Blacks discover and actualize themselves. Both the poets exhibit a high degree of optimism in their poems. Brooks holds the view that the best is yet to be. She encourages the Black boys to delve deep beneath the seemingly false surface:

\begin{verbatim}

Invade now where you can or can't prevail.  
Take this:  
there's fertile ground beneath the pseudo-ice
Take this:  
sharpen your hatchets. Force into the green....\textsuperscript{417}

\end{verbatim}

Brooks' "Speech to the Young. Speech to the Progress-Toward" presents her optimistic message in a capsule form:

\begin{verbatim}

Say to them,  
say to the down-keepers,

\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{415} Hughes, "The Negro Mother," in SPLH, p.288.

\textsuperscript{416} Idem.

\textsuperscript{417} Brooks, "Boys. Black," in Beckonings, p.15.
the sun-slappers,
the self-soilers,
the harmony-hushers,
"Even if you are not ready for day
it cannot always be night."
You will be right.
For that is the hard home-run.

And remember:
live not for Battles Won
Live not for The-End-of-the-Song.
Live in the along....\(^{418}\)

The speaker in "my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell" stores her bread
and honey in jars and cabinets of her "will,"

Hoping that, when the devil days of my hurt
Drag out to their last dregs...

My taste will not have turned insensitive
To honey and bread old purity could love....\(^{419}\)

One notes a cheerful and positive attitude to life and an anticipation of a brighter
future in the works of Hughes. His poem "Youth" portrays his conviction and
hope:

We have tomorrow
Bright before us
Like a flame.

Yesterday
A night-gone thing,
A sun-down name.

\(^{418}\) Brooks, "Speech to the Young. Speech to the Progress-Toward," in FP, p.23.

\(^{419}\) Brooks, "my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell," in WGB, p.50.
And dawn-today
Broad arch above the road we came.
We march!...\(^420\)

Another proclamation of his faith is to be found in "History":

The past has been a mint
Of blood and sorrow.
That must not be
True of tomorrow....\(^421\)

Brooks and Hughes believe in "dreams." To some extent, dreams, when nourished and cherished, help Blacks to survive amidst tribulations. They are visions which keep their hopes up and alive. They aid in enlivening their spirit and enhancing their joy. Moreover, they empower their mere existence with meaning, hope and faith in a promising future. The purpose of these Black artists is to present dreams for the Blacks to hold on to or to help the Blacks develop their own dreams.

Brooks talks of dreams which "must wait till after hell."\(^422\) She exhorts Blacks to have a dream or belief or reach through the Leftist Orator. She is able to detect "large countries"\(^423\) in the eyes of the Black women.

\(^420\) Hughes, "Youth," in DK, p.77.
\(^421\) Hughes, "History," in P and L, p.69.
\(^422\) Brooks, "My dreams, my works, must wait till after hell," in WGB, p.50.
\(^423\) Brooks, "To Black Women," in To Disembark, p.44.
Hughes has much to talk of dreams. He loves to talk of the "dream of utter aliveness" in "Demand":

Listen!
Dear dream of utter aliveness --
Touching my body of utter death --
Tell me, O quickly! dream of aliveness,
The flaming source of your bright breath.
Tell me, O dream of utter aliveness --
Knowing so well the wind and the sun --
Where is this light
Your eyes see forever?
And what is this wind
You touch when you run?... 424

Hughes beautifully portrays how a dream works its way, passing on from one stage to another:

First in the heart is the dream
Then the mind starts seeking a way.
His eyes look out on the world,

The eyes see there materials for building,
See the difficulties, too, and the obstacles.

The hand seeks tools to cut the wood,
To till the soil, and harness the power of the waters.
Then the hand seeks other hands to help,
A community of hands to help --
Thus the dream becomes not one man's dream alone,
But a community dream.... 425

Hughes further filters the essence and scope of dreams in "Dreams":

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

424 Hughes, "Demand," in SPLH, p.96.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow....

Apart from dreams, Blacks must seek ways and means to face the present situations. They must use their situations as stepping stones for the furtherance of their lives. Instead of lounging in sorrow and despair, they must make the best use of their present. In "When Handed a Lemon, Make Lemonade," Brooks finely distils this truth:

I've lived through lemons,
sugaring them.
"When handed a lemon,
make lemonade."
That is what
some sage has said.
"When handed a lemon,
make lemonade."

There is always a use
for lemon juice.
Do you know what to do with
trouble, children?
Make lemonade. Make lemonade.
"Handed a lemon, make lemonade" [My emphasis]....

One finds the same truth viewed in another angle in Hughes' "Island":

Wave of sorrow,
Do not drown me now:
I see the island
Still ahead somehow.

426 Hughes, "Dreams," in DK, p.7.
I see the island
And its sands are fair:

Wave of sorrow.
Take me there [My emphasis]....

Here "sorrow" is not an end in itself. The same wave which can drown a person can also take a person to the fair island. Both terms "lemon" and "wave" which these poets use as symbols for trouble and sorrow respectively, are in fact leaping-boards, helping one to lunge forward in life.

In order to channelize and harness the innate moral courage in a human being in right directions, Brooks and Hughes use several action-words which constructively activate and invigorate the Blacks. Brooks is more lavish in using imperative terms than Hughes. She gives a series of commands like pellets, to be immediately obeyed. One understands the urgency in her call to the Black boys:

See, say, salvage.
Legislate.
Enact our inward law.

Hurry.
Force through the sludge.
Wild thick scenery subdue....

Brooks' voice resounds with an urge to propel the Blacks towards action. "First fight. Then fiddle" is replete with directives. Here the mother advises her children on how to "civilize a space" first in order to live:

428 Hughes, "Island," in SPLH, p.78.
First fight. Then fiddle. Ply the slipping string
With feathery sorcery; muzzle the note
With hurting love; the music that they wrote
Bewitch, bewilder. Qualify to sing
Threadwise. Devise no salt, no hempen thing
For the dear instrument to bear. Devote
The bow to silks and honey. Be remote
A while from malice and from murdering.
But first to arms, to armor. Carry hate
In front of you and harmony behind.
Be deaf to music and to beauty blind.
Win war. Rise bloody, maybe not too late
For having first to civilize a space
Wherein to play your violin with grace [My emphasis]....

Needless to say, one understands that these orders cannot be carried out without
self-trust and fortitude on the part of the listeners. Brooks continues to instruct
further. She wants the Blacks to live, define and medicate the "whirlwind" which
is the "troubled lot" of the Blacks. Their existence must be qualified by
enjoyment. Instead of being followers of directions they must be the definers of
their situation. They are the salt and preservers of their society:

...the whirlwind is our commonwealth.
Not the easy man, who rides above them all,
not the jumbo brigand,
not the pet bird of poets, that sweetest sonnet,
shall straddle the whirlwind.
Nevertheless, live.
All about are the cold places,
all about are the pushmen and jeopardy, theft --
all about are the stormers and scramblers but
what must our Season be, which starts from Fear?
Live and go out.
Define and
medicate the whirlwind....

430 Brooks, "First fight. Then fiddle," in WGB, p.102.
Here again, one detects Brooks' call for courage and valour on the part of the Blacks because the pet bird of poets and the sweetest sonnets cannot straddle the wind any more. An easy man will not do. Whoever defines and cures the season must be a person who can face the whirlwind with strong will power, resoluteness and valiancy.

Violent and militant reactions which only worsen their state must be avoided at all cost. Instead, the Blacks are to spread, bloom and flower and thereby permeate the society with the fragrance of their dignified lives. Indeed, their "blooming" is to be conducted amidst the noise and whip of the whirlwind, without cringing or receding to the background. Apart from using the image of blooming, Brooks also uses the images of leaning, extending, reaching out and beginning. Darkness which exists for the Blacks should not be an excuse. They must begin the cultivation of strength in darkness itself. Cultivation takes time but its rewards are great -- healing and enhancement. The poem "To Prisoners" holds a message to all those who are in the "non-cheering dark":

I call for you cultivation of strength in the dark.
Dark gardening
in the vertigo cold.
in the hot paralysis
Under the wolves and coyotes of particular silences.
Where it is dry.
Where it is dry.
I call for you
cultivation of victory Over
long blows that you want to give and blows you are going to get.
Over
what wants to crumble you down, to sicken you. I call for you
cultivation of strength to heal and enhance
in the non-cheering dark,
in the many many mornings-after;
in the chalk and choke....

Brooks, "To Prisoners," in To Disembark, p.45.
Hughes uses action-words in a limited capacity, but his poems are nevertheless charged with force and vigour. He also talks of reaching out for stars. He advises a black boy to reach out and take a star. He appeals to the Blacks to keep their hands on the plough and never to turn back. He repeatedly exhorts "KEEP YOUR HAND ON THE PLOW! HOLD ON!"\(^{433}\) to drive home the truth, that the Blacks should take heart and continue to live with unflinching will and undaunted spirit.

Like the mother in Brooks' "First fight. Then fiddle," the mother in Hughes' "The Negro Mother" gives a succession of exhortations:

\begin{quote}
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair,  
Remember my ears, heavy with sorrow --  
And \textcolor{blue}{\textit{make}} of those years a torch for tomorrow.  
Make of my past a road to the light  
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.  
Lift high my banner out of the dust.  
Stand like free men supporting my trust.  
Believe in the right, let none push you back.  
Remember the whip and the slaver's track.  
Remember how the strong in struggle and strife  
Still bar you the way, and deny you life --  
But \textcolor{blue}{\textit{march}} ever forward, breaking down bars.  
Look ever upward at the sun and the stars [My emphasis]....\(^{434}\)
\end{quote}

This testament of faith challenges the Black children to be faithful and unrelenting, like Cora in "Cora Unashamed," who withstands the "whirlwind" and

\(^{433}\) Hughes, "Freedom's Plow," in SPLH, p.295.  
\(^{434}\) Hughes, "The Negro Mother," in SPLH, p.289.
storms of life with courage and faith:

Cora was like a tree -- once rooted, she stood, inspite of storms and strife, wind, and rocks, in the earth...

Holding fast to their dreams, the Blacks are advised to "wait" for the dawn of their life optimistically.

Lovely, dark, and lonely one,  
Bare your bosom to the sun.  
Do not be afraid of light,  
You who are a child of night.

Open wide your arms to life,  
Whirl in the wind of pain and strife,

Face the wall with the dark closed gate,  
Beat with bare, brown fists --  
And wait [My emphasis]...

The term "wait' does not signify mere delay; rather, it is a term which exhorts the Blacks to wait for the right time and for the opportune moment to act.

Being a woman artist herself, Brooks' poems naturally tend to focus on women and their problems in particular. She has more encouraging words for women. Having discovered her own rights and place as a woman, Brooks specifically recommends to women to realize their speciality and enjoy themselves thoroughly. In her Report from Part One she expresses her view in detail:

Black Woman must remember, through all the prattle about walking or not walking three or twelve steps behind or ahead of her male, that her personhood precedes her femalehood; that, sweet as sex may be, she cannot endlessly brood on

435 Hughes, "Cora Unashamed," in LHR, p.3.
436 Hughes, "Song," in DK, p.41.
Black Man's blondes, blues, blunders. She is a person in the world -- with wrongs to right, stupidities to outwit, with her man when possible, on her own when not. And she is also here to enjoy. She will be here, like any other, once only. Therefore she must, in the midst of tragedy and hatred and neglect, in the midst of her own efforts to purify, mightily enjoy the readily available: Sunshine, and pets and children and conversation and games and travel (tiny or large) and books and walks and chocolate cake....

In "To Black Women," Brooks presents the difficulties faced by Black women and their faith reflected in their eyes and ends in a positive note of advice:

Sisters,
where there is cold silence --
no hallelujahs, no hurrahs at all, no handshakes,
no neon red or blue, no smiling faces --
prevail.
Prevail across the editors of the world!
who are obsessed, self-honeying and self-crowned
in the seduced arena.
   It has been a
hard trudge, with fainting, bandaging and death.
There have been startling confrontations.
There have been tramplings. Tramplings
of monarchs and of other men.

But there remain large countries in your eyes.
Shrewd sun.
The civil balance
The listening secrets.

And you create and train your flowers still....

Hughes does not give any direct advice to women like Brooks. But he pictures many a woman, troubled, cheated, exploited and deserted. He creates them as

437 Brooks, RPO, p.204.

438 Brooks, "To Black Women," in To Disembark, p.44.
symbols of faith and fibre too. Thus he reaches the women with his message of hope and sympathy. He has not created any model of a man; rather, he has created models like "Madam" and also women who have suffered by male domination. Thus he displays his sympathy for the Black women. His "Ballad of the Girl Whose Name Is Mud" shows how a girl is not discouraged when she is deserted by her man:

... nobody's seen her shed a tear,
Nor seen her hang her head.
Ain't even heard her murmur,
Lord, I wish I was dead!

No! the hussy's telling everybody
(Just as though it was no sin)
That if she had a chance
She'd do it again!...\textsuperscript{439}

Having traversed through the four stages of self-discovery, an individual finds new avenues and vast vistas of life thrown open before him to actualize himself. Also, having come upon a proper understanding of himself, he can undertake various responsible roles in the society. No more need he play the old fearful and submissive roles. He is able to control himself and his reactions and wield his life himself instead of being manipulated and exploited by others. Having esteem for himself and trust in himself, he is able to keep his poise. Brooks' comment on the new Black is worth noting:

There is indeed a new Black today. He is different from any the world has known. He's a tall-walker. Almost firm....\textsuperscript{440}

\textsuperscript{439} Hughes, "Ballad of the Girl Whose Name Is Mud," in \textit{S in H}, p.91.

In a similar vein, Hughes' "America's Young Black Joe" presents Black Joe walking proudly with his head held high:

I'm America's YOUNG BLACK JOE.
Most times good natured, smiling and gay
My sky is sometimes cloudy
But it won't stay that way.

I'm comin', I'm comin' --
But my head ain't bending low!
I'm walking proud! I'm speaking out loud! --

I'm America's YOUNG BLACK JOE!...

Viewing life from an altogether fresh perspective, the Black individual no longer views his White victimizer as his enemy but as a person to be sympathized. He can perceive his environment in a new light and transform the violence around him into awareness, with his inward resources. In short, he can convert the cold, dead, and hostile environment into a warm, life-supplying one. All these changes take time to materialize. The "line" which bars their progress is still there:

... At any rate, the line is
Long and electric ...

... it stretches there beneath....


443 Hughes, "As I Grew Older," in SPLH, p.11.
And Hughes refers to the same as "a wall" which "Rose slowly, / Slowly, /
Between me and my dream." 443 Failures may stare at one's face; victory is slow
but sure:

To fail, to flourish, to wither or to win.
We lurch, distribute, we extend, begin.... 444

The present intelligence of the Blacks is not enough. That is why Brooks
contemplatively asks "Is light enough," 445 in her poem about the garbageman.
Similarly, in "Big Bessie throws her son into the street" Bessie is sure that her
son's "candles" are not enough. Her son needs wisdom, precision and "the will, a
wild inflammable stuff," 446 in order to "chip and eat" 447 his destiny. Melhem's
interpretation is worth recording: "In 'the street' of life, he may discover his own
resources and decipher his own destiny." 448

Hughes also points out to the need of sense when he says about the dancer:

With no sense, just wonderful feet,
What could possibly be all-reet?
Did he get anywhere? No!... 449

446 Brooks, "Big Bessie throws her son into the street," in SP, p.127.
447 Idem.
449 Hughes, "Dancer," in SPLH, p.236.
The Blacks can develop their present status through an involvement in Black art and literature; "... black literature," as Melvin Dixon observes, "is an essential element in the process of self-discovery, a process through which the poet seeks to 'remake the Negro image from within'."\(^450\) Brooks and Hughes are fully aware of this that they train and enthuse as many Black artists as possible. No doubt, committed Black artists will awaken the Blacks to an awareness about themselves and lead them towards self-discovery.

It is beyond doubt that one's own self is the greatest and the most valuable treasure one possesses, which ought to be discovered and explored. Brooks' "Myself" appreciating her supreme self-sufficiency finely projects this premise:

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Myself is all I have,
Myself is all I need;
Should grain and blossoms be?
Myself can plant the seed.

Myself requires no other
To help her better know
Dawn splendour, gold of noon,

Or ruddy sunset glow.
Myself requires no teacher,
Herself knows how to sing!
She is full strong enough to be
A lone and quiet thing....\(^451\)
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Hughes, by experience, knows the ultimate value of one's self. A man, after having tried all possibilities outside him, must finally, in his desperate state, turn

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and run into his own self, because in himself does he find what he has been searching for so far:

When you turn the corner  
And you run into yourself  
Then you know that you have turned  
All the corners that are left....

Thus the two poets recommend that through self-discovery and self-actualization the Blacks can gain recognition and it is this recognition, and not militancy, that could earn for them the rightful place in any society. It is this recognition that will earn the respect and good will from the Establishment.

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452 Hughes, "Final Curve," in SPLH, p.136.