

The Weary Blues

by

Langston Hughes

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway . . .
He did a lazy sway . . .
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan--
"Ain't got nobody in all this world,
Ain't got nobody but ma self.
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more--
"I got the Weary Blues
And I can't be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can't be satisfied--
I ain't happy no mo'
And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

The poem I chose was *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes. I chose this poem because it had very strong visual lines and imagery. In my opinion, blues music is full of emotions, usually depressing, focusing on the person's troubles and upsetting topics. The poem emphasized a musician's talent with playing the piano and singing, while expressing the unhappiness the man was feeling. Hughes diction indicated that the tune and atmosphere was very depressing and gloomy. Other visual cues were more direct, by telling the reader the man performing was an African American and that he was playing a blues song. In my research, I found that most other artists' interpretations of the blues genre were painted in shades of blue, representing the common melancholy in those song lyrics. To represent the poet's description of a depressing song, I painted with differing shades of blue acrylics. I separated the hands playing the piano and put them in the foreground because of the author's focus on how well the musician performed.

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