

The Dove

by Langston Hughes

...and here is
old Picasso and the dove
and dreams as fragile
as pottery with dove
in white on clay
dark brown as
earth is brown
from our old
battleground...



Just considering the title the reader may expect the poem to be about peace. Such expectation is justified by the title The Dove, a symbolic one.

The dove is the animal generally referring to peace. The poem focusses the attention on its shape which recalls the one of a dove. It is in free verse arranged into 3 different parts: it has not got stanzas and there is a parallelism between the beginning and the end.

The text starts with 3 dots, thus conveying the idea of something coming before and something coming next in the end.

The poem is voiced by somebody who shows an old picture by Picasso where you can see a dove and dreams that are as fragile as pottery.

The dove is white against a background recalling the colour of clay and earth. Earth is of course brown as is the colour of any ground on which people fought during war battles.

The sound effect of the poem creates the idea of a wide, distant, open space. It is the result of the density of long vowel sounds that sometimes occur in very near lines. Furthermore the poet exploits the power of alliteration (consider for example: "*dove*" and "*dreams*").

The echo effect contributes to the idea of large spaces with a certain sad feeling of experiences that unfortunately come over and over again in one's mind an life.

The semantic choices recall the domain of colours: indeed two colours surround the whole poem, namely brown and white.

White recalls the dove, purity and innocence, while brown recalls the colour of the earth, of the ground, of pottery and clay.

But when you think of clay other associations cross people's mind: clay recalls death and the end of life. Life and death, innocence and experience which can also bring forth war and death. They are both real objects of the poet's reflections.