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What Happens to a Dream Deferred: Accessing Strength in Times of Vulnerability

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

What Happens to a Dream Deferred: Accessing Strength in Times of Vulnerability

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Amara Anjenetter Granderson

Committee in charge:

Richard Robichaux, Chair

Eva Barnes

Ursula Meyer

2020

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The Thesis of Amara Anjenetter Granderson is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California San Diego

2020

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Alisa Martin and Ricardo Granderson, my maternal grandparents, Gloria Martin & Paul Martin Sr., my maternal aunt and uncle, Deanna Martin & Paul Martin Jr., my paternal great aunt and uncle, Janet & Uncle Junior, my paternal aunt & uncle, Lorraine Granderson & Floyd Granderson, and my cousins. I also dedicate this to my ancestral family, my paternal grandparents, Yvonne Granderson, Lennox Granderson, Ms. Edris Granderson, my maternal great great aunt, Tía Perla, my maternal great grandmother & my namesake, Anjenetter Lillian Brown, and her daughter who is still of this earth, a ferocious Sagittarius, my great aunt, Daria Brown.

I also dedicate this thesis to my cohort of 2020, my collective creation group of 2017, my Chautauqua family, my chosen family, and Brandon O' Sullivan.

Each of you has paved an unfathomable way for me, and for all of you, I am eternally grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Supplemental Files.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Abstract of the Thesis.....	viii

LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

File 1. *RAISIN* Photo 1, grandson_RAISIN_Photo1.jpg

File 2. *RAISIN* Photo 2, grandson_RAISIN_Photo2.jpg

File 3. *RAISIN* Photo 3, grandson_RAISIN_Photo3.jpg

File 4. *RAISIN* Photo 4, grandson_RAISIN_Photo4.jpg

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

What Happens to a Dream Deferred: Accessing Strength in Times of Vulnerability

by

Amara Anjenetter Granderson

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Richard Robichaux, Chair

What with today's pandemic causing the cancellation of our graduation, it's easy to wonder if anything that occurred in these past three years were anything more than a fever dream. By ending this graduate training with such an abrupt dissipation, it feels like my dreams have been deferred, without my permission. Langston Hughes, poses the question, "What happens to a dream deferred?" I am not only forced to answer this question as myself, but as Bennie.

During the winter quarter of first year, I had the incredible privilege of playing Lorraine Hansberry's classic, semi-autobiographical Beneatha Younger in "A Raisin In the Sun." My exploration of Bennie was perhaps one of the most rewarding, intangible gifts I could have ever received-- perhaps because the performance was rooted in the fundamentals. We had created an environment in which we could listen and respond truthfully to one another from the first week we started to block the play, so that by the time our run commenced, our vessels were ready.

These impassive times might be robbing us of a graduation ceremony, but it does not negate the intangible gifts we have acquired over the past three years. Whether it be the embodiment of Beneatha, the reclaiming of my physical health, imparting encouragement and wisdom in the classroom, and psychological & spiritual repair, I have rooted myself in the fundamentals which have made me ready. I choose to view my circumstances, my dreams deferred, and access my vulnerability to keep driving my vessel & my dreams alive...much unlike a raisin in the sun.