

Strange Fruit

(lyrics by Abel Europol - performed by Billie Holiday)

- 1 Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.
- 5 Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh!
Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,
- 10 For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop

bear: (of a tree or plant) produce (fruits or flowers) -
root: *racine*

swing: *se balancer* – **breeze:** *brise*
hang: *pendre* - **poplar tree:** *peuplier*

pastoral: evoking country life, typically in a romanticized or idealized form.

gallant : brave, heroic or charmingly attentive
bulging : *globuleux, saillant* - **twisted** : *tordu*
scent: *parfum, senteur* – **sweet** : *doux, agréable*
sudden : *soudaine* - **smell** : *odeur* - **flesh:** *chair*

crow: *corbeau* - **pluck:** *cueillir*

gather: *rassembler* - **suck:** (*ici*) *dessécher* -

rot: *pourrir* – **drop** : *laisser tomber*

bitter: *amère* - **crop:** *récolte*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD2evtQP8ps>

What is the blood at the root a symbol of?

Why are the eyes bulging and the mouth twisted?

Put together by contrasting pairs the lines 5 to 8. What are the lyrics trying to show?

Song for a dark girl (by Langston Hughes)

Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross roads* tree.

Way Down South in Dixie
(Bruised* body high in air)
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer.

Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
Love is a naked* shadow
On a gnarled* and naked tree.



Langston Hughes (1902 –1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri.

cross roads : *carrefour*

What was the use... : *à quoi servait ...*

bruised: *contusionné, couvert de bleus* – **naked** : *nu(e)* – **gnarled** : *noueux*