A RAISIN IN THE SUN by Lorraine Hansberry Beneatha

Scene set-up: Set in a Black Chicago ghetto in the 1950s, A Raisin In the Sun is the story of how three generations of the Younger family overcome their conflicts and bring their divergent hopes and dreams into common focus. Mama Younger has recently received her deceased husband’s insurance money, and she now hopes to be able to move to a better neighborhood. Her son Walter dreams of quitting his chauffeur job and opening a liquor store, and Beneatha, her liberated daughter has aspirations of going to medical school. Only Mama is able to hold the family together in the face of the racist forces that seem intent on keeping the Younger’s from attaining their dreams. In Act HI, Beneatha has just learned that Walter has lost the family’s money in a poor investment, and with it her hope of becoming a doctor. She speaks to Asagai, a young Nigerian student and friend of the family, who has asked: “And you, now?”

BENEATHA: Me?…Me?…Me I’m nothing…me. When I was very small…we used to take our sleds out in the wintertime and the only hills we had were the ice covered stone steps of some houses down the street. And we used to fill them in with snow and make them smooth and slide down them all day… and it was very dangerous you know…far too steep…and sure enough one day a kid named Rufus came down too fast and hit the sidewalk…and we saw his face just split open right there in front of us…and I remember standing there looking at his bloody open face thinking that was the end of Rufus. But the ambulance came and they took him to the hospital and they fixed the broken bones and they sewed it all up…and the next time I saw Rufus he just had a little line down the middle of his face…I never got over that… [(WALTER sits up, listening on the bed. Throughout this scene it is j important that we feel his reaction at all times, that he visibly respond to the words of his sister and ASAGAI.)] [ASAGAI: What?] BENEATHA: That that was what one person could do for another, fix him upÂ³sew up the problem, make him all right again. That was the most marvelous thing in the world…I wanted to do that. I always thought it was the one concrete thing in the world that a human being could do. Fix up the sick, you knowÂ³and make them whole again. This was truly being God… [ASAGAI: You wanted to be God?] BENEATHA: [No.] I wanted to cure. It used to be so important to me. I wanted to cure. It used to matter. I used to care. I mean about people and how their bodies hurt…