

Ballad of the Landlord

Langston Hughes, 1940

1 Landlord, landlord,
2 My roof has sprung a leak.
3 Don't you 'member I told you about it
4 Way last week?

5 Landlord, landlord,
6 These steps is broken down.
7 When you come up yourself
8 It's a wonder you don't fall down.

9 Ten Bucks you say I owe you?
10 Ten Bucks you say is due?
11 Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'l pay you
12 Till you fix this house up new.

13 What? You gonna get eviction orders?
14 You gonna cut off my heat?
15 You gonna take my furniture and
16 Throw it in the street?

17 Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.
18 Talk on-till you get through.
19 You ain't gonna be able to say a word
20 If I land my fist in you.

21 Police! Police!
22 Come and get this man!
23 He's trying to ruin the government
24 And overturn the land!

25 Copper's whistle!
26 Patrol bell!
27 Arrest.
28 Precinct Station.
29 Iron cell.
30 Headlines in press:
31 MAN THREATENS LANDLORD
32 TENANT HELD NO BAIL
33 JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY JAIL!

How does the poet use structural techniques to convey the meaning of the poem?
