Symbolism: Mama's Potted Plant in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

A symbol is any object, action, or event that suggests a range of associations beyond itself and is used by writers to express abstract ideas, clarify meanings, and reveal deeper themes in a literary work. Carefully read the descriptions of the "feeble little plant" that Mama keeps on the window sill throughout the play and provide commentary on how Hansberry uses the potted plant as a symbol to convey the larger themes of her play.

Act I
Concrete Detail: MAMA [. . .] *(She crosses through the room, goes to the window, opens it, and brings in a feeble little plant growing doggedly in a small pot on the window sill. She feels the dirt and puts it back out)* [. . .] Lord, if this little plant don't get more sun than it's been getting it ain't never going to see spring again. (40-41)
Commentary:

Act II
Concrete Detail: BENEATHA *(Laughingly noticing what her mother is doing)* Mama, what are you doing? MAMA Fixing my plant so it won't get hurt none on the way . . . BENEATHA Mama, you going to take *that* to the new house? [. . .] MAMA *(Stopping and looking at her)* It expresses ME! (121)
Commentary:

Act III
Concrete Detail: MAMA *(*[. . .] *MAMA stands, at last alone in the living room, her plant on the table before her as the lights start to come down. She* [. . .] *takes a final desperate look, pulls her coat about her, pats her hat and goes out. The lights dim down. The door opens and she comes back in, grabs her plant, and goes out for the last time)* (151)
Commentary: