



*The Train, 1974*

Etching & Aquatint 2 /5HC, 18 x 22 ¼, Courtesy of Jerald Melberg Gallery  
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Trains represent an important metaphor for Bearden. In the south, African American neighborhoods were often near the train tracks. The trains represented an encroachment upon, as well as an escape from, their world.

- **Let's Look** - Identify as many objects as you can in this picture. Put the names of objects in the boxes to help you get started. How are the women and girls dressed?
- **Let's Analyze** - What might the objects tell us about the people. Do any of the people in this painting look like people you know?
- **Let's Interpret** - Choose one individual in the painting to write about. But, first give her a name. Now imagine what she is thinking and how that makes you feel. Be sure to look closely at her facial expression to support what you write. And, don't forget to explain why you feel the way that you do.

The train was a practical and relatively inexpensive means of travel for black families who wanted to leave the rural American south. During the 1920s, 30s, and 40s thousands of black people went north in hopes of finding good jobs, education for their children, and a better way of life. They also hoped to escape the discriminatory **Jim Crow** ([www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/resources.htm](http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/resources.htm)) laws that had been established in the 1880s. These laws, which were still rigorously applied in the south, denied African Americans their civil rights as American citizens. Many families, like Bearden's, went to New York City and settled in Harlem.

- Now **look** again at the picture of the Train...can you identify any of the materials that Romare Bearden used to make this picture?