

1. **twilight**

the time of day immediately following sunset

*He waited on the stoop until **twilight**, pretending to watch the sun melt into the dirty gray Harlem sky.*

2. **transistor**

a semiconductor device capable of amplification

*Up and down the street **transistor** radios clicked on and hummed into the sour air.*

3. **stoop**

carry oneself with head and shoulders bent forward

*"I see you now, boy, old and **stooped**," said Major, shuffling to the center of the room.*

4. **perpetual**

continuing forever or indefinitely

*Henry limped down into the clubroom, dragging his crippled left leg, the **perpetual** grin spread across his skinny face.*

5. **stench**

a distinctive odor that is offensively unpleasant

*The **stench** of wine and garbage still hung in the moist June air.*

6. synagogue

the place of worship for a Jewish congregation

*The Epsteins would be in their **synagogue** now, wearing skull caps and praying.*

7. undertaker

one whose business is the management of funerals

*Aunt Pearl would be sitting on the stoop, waving the fan the **undertaker** gave away at summer funerals.*

8. sheepish

showing a sense of shame

*He dropped his hands when he saw Alfred, and the big grin turned **sheepish**.*

9. surge

rise or move forward

*The crowd **surged** forward, sweeping Alfred along.*

10. scamper

run or move about quickly or lightly

*There was a soft, **scampering** sound, then quiet again.*

11. pneumonia

respiratory disease characterized by lung inflammation

And James was there three years later when Alfred's mother died of pneumonia in the city hospital, sitting with him all night, whispering, "Gonna be all right, Alfred."

12. **scurry**

move about or proceed hurriedly

*He swallowed back his nausea as a rat **scurried** over his arm, squealing.*

13. **peer**

look searchingly

*He felt her calloused hand move gently over his swollen jaw long before he saw her red-rimmed eyes **peering** down at him.*

14. **tenement**

a run-down apartment house barely meeting minimal standards

*Aunt Pearl waited until they had clattered out of the apartment and down the **tenement** stairs before she turned back to Alfred.*

15. **burrow**

move through by or as by digging

*He **burrowed** deeper into the bed.*

16. **muted**

being or made softer or less loud or clear

*An occasional peal of drunken laughter drowned out the hoarse yells of tired children and the stoop chatter and the **muted** noise of a dozen transistors on different stations.*

17. antiseptic

a substance that destroys harmful micro-organisms

*A quivering chill ran up his legs, and his teeth began to grind and a ball of ice formed in the pit of his stomach and he took a breath and plunged through the door, into the darkness, a choking, musty darkness that stank of stale wine and **antiseptic** and sweat and urine and liniment.*

18. steep

set at a high angle (of a slope)

*Put one after another, Alfred, panting, huffing, low steps but hundreds of them, thousands of them in the darkness, the stairs so **steep** he sometimes fell to all fours, scrambling higher, past the sign, DR. COREY, past the sign, GYM - THIRD FLOOR, faster until his breath tangled in his ribs, higher until his throat was dry, faster, higher, until a door loomed before him.*

19. murky

dark or gloomy

*A faint light leaked through a crack, and he hurled himself up at it, paused, took another breath, and plunged into a large, **murky** room.*

20. erect

upright in position or posture

*Donatelli stood up and marched across the room, his square, boxlike body **erect**.*

21. sheaf

a package of several things tied together

*He had a thick **sheaf** of leaflets under his arm.*

22. serene

not agitated

*The **serene** look on Aunt Pearl's face calmed him at first, then made him angrier.*

23. lectern

desk or stand with a slanted top used to hold a text

*The little store-front church was only half filled when they walked in, but Reverend Price was already behind the **lectern**, thumbing through his Bible.*

24. sophisticated

having worldly knowledge and refinement

*Alfred looked away first, wishing something would happen, the train would get stuck between stations, the girl would fall down and need help, anything so he could walk over, suave and **sophisticated**, "I'm Alfred Brooks, may I be of service?"—just like in the movies.*

25. lope

run easily

*Uncle Wilson, tall and bony, too, **loped** across the front room and dropped a big hand on Alfred's shoulder.*

26. lapse

pass into a specified state or condition

*They **lapsed** into silence, Wilson comparing his pipe clouds, Alfred slouching in the porch chair.*

27. tinge

a slight but appreciable amount

*The last time he looked at the clock it was quarter to four, and the faintest **tinge** of pink was brushing the window.*

28. unbearable

incapable of being put up with

*The spring was out of his step, and suddenly the stitch seemed **unbearable**, and he could hear cars moving through the park.*

29. trudge

walk heavily and firmly, as when weary, or through mud

*That's enough for today, he thought, knowing it wasn't, and he slowed down again and started **trudging** back to the apartment.*

30. welfare

governmental provision of assistance to persons in need

*We ain't on **welfare**, the rent's paid up, we got nice Sunday clothes.*

31. cranny

a small opening or crevice

*He swept his way into the back room, jamming the straw broom into nooks and **crannies** he had already swept clean.*

32. batter

strike violently and repeatedly

*The heavy bag was swinging wildly on its chain as the boy with the enormous belly **battered** it with fists as big as cantaloupes.*

33. scrawny

being very thin

*The **scrawny** body came up very slowly, quivering with the strain, folding over until the face and the knees were almost touching.*

34. tattered

worn to shreds; or wearing torn or ragged clothing

*Up close, Alfred could see Bud Martin's ribs pushing through his **tattered** T-shirt.*

35. valise

a small overnight bag for short trips

*But the bony hands were sure and quick as the old man stuffed small jars and rolls of tape into the **valise**.*