

“A Little Girl’s Poem”
by Gwendolyn Brooks



Life is for me and is shining!
Inside me I
feel stars and sun and bells singing.

There are children in the world
all around me and beyond me—
here, and beyond the big waters;
here, and in countries peculiar to themselves.

I want the children to live and to laugh.
I want them to sit with their mothers and fathers
and have happy cocoa together.

I do not want
fire screaming up the sky.
I do not want
families killed in their doorways.

Life is for us, for the children.
Life is for mothers and fathers,
life is for the tall girls and boys
in high school on Henderson Street,
is for the people in Afrikan tents,
the people in English cathedrals,
the people in Indian courtyards;
the people in cottages all over the world.

Life is for us, and is shining.
We have a right to sing.

“Mother to Son”
by Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps.
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

