

Langston Hughes'

Mother to Son

In this poem, Hughes writes about a mother speaking to her son about life's experiences. He uses the metaphor of a crystal stair.

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.

Read "Mother to Son" and answer the following questions.

1. What is the poem about?
2. What is the theme?
3. What poetic devices does Hughes use in this poem?
4. What does the mother want the son to do?