

## 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.

## Brother to Sister

By 6A



Well, sister, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no fancy car.  
It's had holes in the seats,  
And rusty wheels,  
And cheap paint,  
And worn carpet on the floor—  
Tattered.  
But all the time  
I've been a-drivin' on,  
And reachin' gas stations,  
And turnin' corners,  
And drivin' at night  
With no tail lights.  
So, girl, don't you buy no cheap car.  
Don't you go to no used car dealer.  
'Cause you finds it's kinder a better deal.  
Don't you buy it now—  
For I've still drivin', baby,  
I've still reachin' gas stations,  
And life for me ain't been no fancy car.

## Citizens to President

By 6B



Well, President, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no blue sky.  
It's had thunder in it,  
And lightning,  
And thick fog,  
And hail the size of midgets—  
Scary!  
But all the time  
I've been a-runnin',  
And dodgin' death,  
And screamin' for light,  
And hopn' for the sun  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, sir, don't you go hidin'.  
Don't you leave us out in the storm.  
'Cause you find it's kinder hard to take everybody in.  
Don't you forget us now—  
For I've still hopn',  
I've still runnin'  
And life for me ain't been no blue sky.

## Friend to Friend

By 6D



Well, friend, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no easy school year.  
It's had "F's" in it,  
And detention points,  
And mean teachers,  
And bathrooms with bad odor—  
Stanky!  
But all the time  
I've been a-tryn',  
And survivn' school days,  
And makin' friends,  
And sometimes goin' to hot classes  
Where there ain't been no air.  
So, homie, don't you drop out.  
Don't go down the wrong hallway.  
'Cause you find ya losin' your way.  
Don't you forget where your locker is now—  
For I've still survivn', buddy,  
I've still a-tryn'  
And life for me ain't been no easy school year.

## Grandfather to Grandson

By 6E



Well, grandson, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no expensive hotel.  
It's had roaches in it,  
And rats,  
And cracked walls,  
And bathrooms with dirty towels—  
Filthy.  
But all the time  
I'se been a-cleanin'  
And killin' rats,  
And scrubbin' tubs,  
And sometimes plunging toilets  
With germs on the seat.  
So, youngster, don't you be lazy.  
Don't you sit down on that comfy chair.  
'Cause you find it kinder comfortable.  
Don't you rest yet—  
For I'se still plungin', whipper snapper,  
I'se still cleanin',  
And life for me ain't been no expensive hotel.