

Catalog No. 8678

Mother to Son

for Women's Chorus (SA) and Piano

Langston Hughes
(1902–1967)

Gwyneth Walker

Mother to Son is based on the powerful poem by Langston Hughes. The mother (voice) is a strong woman, one who has persevered and is still climbing, still surviving: "Well, son, I'll tell you: / Life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

With motion ♩ = 120



p
Rec. ad lib.

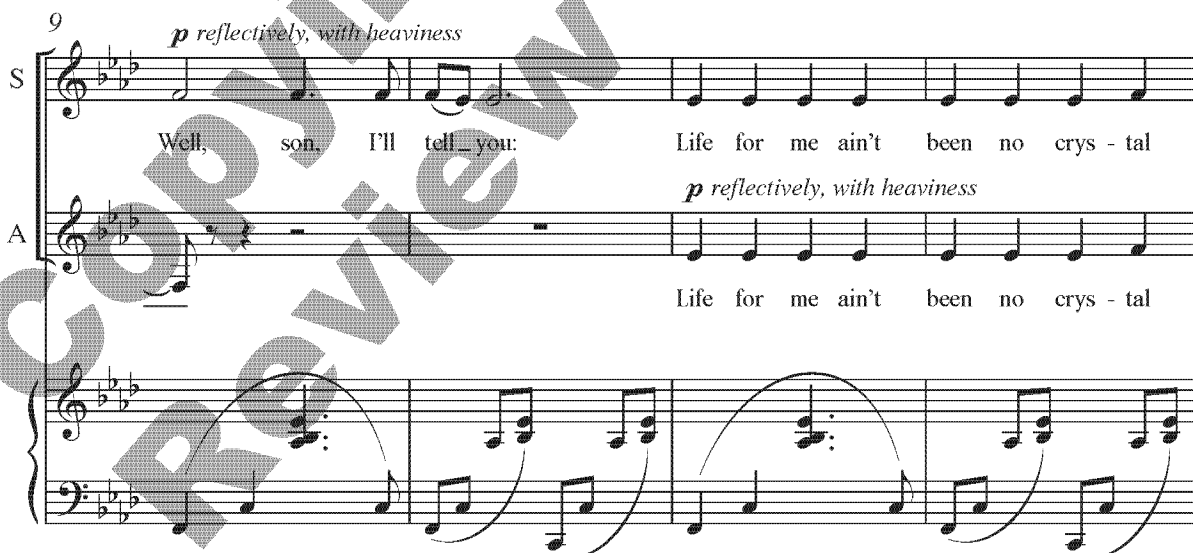
The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The right hand features a melodic line with a half-note chord on the first beat, followed by eighth-note pairs. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with quarter notes.

5 *p*
A
Hmm



This system includes a Soprano line (A) and piano accompaniment. The Soprano line begins with a long note and a slur over the next two notes, with the text "Hmm" written below. The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and harmonic patterns as the introduction.

9 *p reflectively, with heaviness*
S
Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crys - tal
p reflectively, with heaviness
A
Life for me ain't been no crys - tal



This system features the vocal entry for both Soprano (S) and Alto (A) and piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The Soprano line starts with the lyrics "Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crys - tal". The Alto line enters with the lyrics "Life for me ain't been no crys - tal". The piano accompaniment continues with the established accompaniment pattern.

A version for Soprano Solo and Piano is also available, Catalog No. 8469.

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13 *unis.*

S
A

stair. _____ It's had

17 *mp* *mf* *div.*

S
A

tacks in it, And splin-ters, And boards torn up, And

21

S
A

pla - ces with no car - pet on the floor _____

25 *rit.*

S
A

Bare. _____

Bare. _____

29 *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

unis. p

S
A

... no crys - tal

a tempo (♩ = 120)

p

33

S
A

stair.

But

37

cresc. poco a poco

div.

S
A

all the time

I'se been a - climb - in' on,

And

cresc. poco a poco

41

(cresc.)

S
A

reach - in' land - in's,

And turn - in' cor - ners,

And

(cresc.)

4

Faster

45

S *f*
 some - times go - in' in the dark Where there ain't been no light.

A *f*
 some - times go - in' in the dark Where there ain't been no light.

Faster

f *mf*
 (Piano accompaniment with dynamics and *Red.* markings)

48

rit.

Slower

S — So boy, don't you turn back.

A — Don't you set down on the steps 'Cause you

rit. **Slower** *gva*
 (Piano accompaniment with dynamics and *Red.* markings)

52

rit.

S — Don't you fall now —

A find it's kind er hard. Don't you fall now —

loco *p* *rit.*
 (Piano accompaniment with dynamics and *Red.* markings)

Tempo I (♩ = 120)

56 *p*

S For I'se still go - in', hon - ey, —

A For I'se still go - in', hon - ey, —

Tempo I (♩ = 120)

(*Rec.*) *Rec. ad lib.*

Quickly

59 *accel. cresc.*

S I'se still climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', —

A I'se still climb - in', climb - in', climb in', climb - in', climb - in', —

accel. Quickly

cresc.

Slower, more freely

62 *f*

S — and life — for me ain't been no crys - tal

A — and life —

f

Slower, more freely

f (*ring through m. 65*)

Rec.

rit.

Tempo I (♩ = 120)

p

65

S
A

stair.

been no crys - tal stair.

f *p*

Tempo I (♩ = 120)

rit.

p

mf

Ad lib.

Ad lib.

Ad lib.

68

S
A

Ah Ah

(p)

71

S
A

74

rit.

Slower ♩ = 108

p

S
A

For I'se still go - in', hon - ey,

rit.

Slower ♩ = 108

p

S
A

77 *accel.*
cresc.

S
A

I'se still climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', climb - in',

accel.
cresc.

80 *f*

S
A

and life for me ain't been no crys - tal, been no crys - tal,

and life, been no crys - tal,

Slower, more freely

f (ring through m. 84)

And.

84 *rit.* **Tempo I** (♩ = 120) *p*

S
A

been no crys - tal stair,

been no crys - tal no crys - tal stair,

mf

rit. **Tempo I** (♩ = 120)

f *dim.*

(*And.*) *And. ad lib.*

88 *(p)*

S no crys - tal stair.

A *p* *(p)*
no crys - tal

(dim.)

And.

91 *rit.*

S stair.

A stair.

rit.

(dim.)

(And.)

93 *(rit.)* *unis. p*

S Mmm

A Mmm

(rit.)

(dim.)

pp

(And.)

