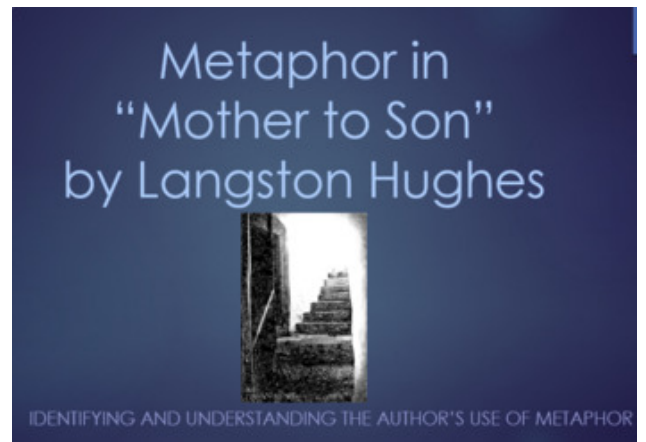


## POETRY

**Directions:** Read through the poem below as one sentence. How does this sound to you? Now read through it line by line, identifying the metaphors. Make a list of the metaphors and provide the meaning.

### 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'se 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'se still goin', honey,  
I'se still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.



Circle the best answer for each question.

1. What do you think sums up the meaning of this poem?
  - a. The mother wants her son to be a carpenter.
  - b. The mother doesn't want her son to give up in hard times.
  - c. The mother lives in a fifth-floor apartment.
  - d. The mother is worried that her son may be afraid of heights.

2. How do the lengths of the lines relate to the subject of the poem?
  - a. They don't.
  - b. They vary as the mother and son get closer and farther apart.
  - c. They make the reader short of breath as climbing the stairs might.
  - d. They resemble steps, longest at bottom and shortest at top, with one landing (line 7).
  
3. What do you think the poet intended readers to see in their minds eye when they read this poem?
  - a. The mother running up a flight of gleaming glass steps.
  - b. The son sitting on the steps relaxing.
  - c. The mother trudging up a dark, dingy stairway.
  - d. The place at the top of the stairs.

**Answer the questions below in the space provided.**

4. Do you think the mother has had an easy life or a hard one? What words make you think so?

5. Is the mother's advice encouraging or discouraging? What makes you think so?