



## Homeschool Learning Network Poetry Reading & Analysis Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Read the following poem, and complete the exercises on the following page.*

### **Mother to Son**

*By Langston Hughes*

*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, >br> And reachin' landin's,  
 And turnin' corners,  
 And sometimes goin' in the dark >br> 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. Which are most effective?
5. What does the mother want the son to do?



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### Rough Summary:

*On this paper, examine the meaning of this poem by paraphrasing its meaning. Write sets of lines in the left column, then summarize its meaning in the right column.*

Lines	Paraphrase



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### POETRY ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. Who is the author of the poem?
  
  
  
  
  
2. Write down two biographical facts about the author:
  - a. X
  
  
  - b. X
  
  
  
  
  
1. What is the exact title?
  
  
  
  
  
2. Write down the rhyme scheme.
  
  
  
  
  
3. Are there any words that seem old-fashioned or out-of-date? List them.
  
  
  
  
  
4. List any structural features, including number of syllables, rhyme pattern, number of lines, etc.
  
  
  
  
  
5. What evidence (if any) does the poem provide about the times in which the poet lived? (i.e., look for archaic language, objects we don't have today, or what objects are missing such as electric lighting)
  
  
  
  
  
6. Discuss the meaning of the poem with the other members of your group. Then, on the reverse of this paper, write down your interpretation. Use paragraph structure, and excellent sentences.