

***Mother to Son, Langston Hughes***

**Langston Hughes:** Well, that's a poem about that old woman who had faith. I like to write poems about people.

This is one about a mother calling her baby:

Albert!

Hey, Albert!

Don't you play in dat road.

You see dem trucks

A-goín' by.

One run ovah you

An' you die.

Albert, don't you play in dat road

And here's a poem picturing an old woman talking to her son who's discouraged. She says,

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.

What that mother is really telling her son is,

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

And that is just what the poems are about in my book *The Dream Keeper*. The final poem in the book is this one called "Youth." This poem is dedicated to all the boys and girls and young men and young women of today.

We have tomorrow  
Bright before us  
Like a flame.

Yesterday  
A night-gone thing,  
A sun-down name.

And dawn-today  
Broad arch above the road we came.

We march, Americans together,  
We march!