

Gwendolyn Brooks

We Real Cool

*The Pool Players.*  
*Seven at the Golden Shovel.*

We real cool. We  
Left school. We

Lurk late. We  
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We  
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We  
Die soon.

Stefanie Wortman 1/17/2016 2:18 PM

**Comment [1]:** Brooks uses enjambment to create a syncopated, jazz-influenced rhythm. Consider how different the poem would sound if all the lines began rather than ended with “We.”

Stefanie Wortman 1/17/2016 2:18 PM

**Comment [2]:** In an interview with George Stavros, Brooks said that these line breaks suggest the young men’s “basic uncertainty.” They hesitate each time they try to express who they are.

Stefanie Wortman 1/17/2016 2:18 PM

**Comment [3]:** The diction, as well as the rhythm, of the poem is informed by music, with verbs like “sing” and “jazz.”

Stefanie Wortman 1/17/2016 2:19 PM

**Comment [4]:** By breaking the swinging rhythm in the last line, Brooks underscores the abrupt and untimely end to these young lives.

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