Poems used in the choral cycle My Girls (1998)

Poetry by Lucille Clifton Music by Gwyneth Walker

This Morning

this morning this morning

i met myself

coming in

a bright
jungle girl
shining
quick as a snake
a tall
tree girl a
me girl

i met myself

this morning coming in

and all day i have been a black bell ringing i survive

survive

survive

<u>To My Girls</u> [last note to my girls]

my girls my girls my almost me mellowed in a brown bag held tight and straining at the top like a good lunch until the bag turned weak and wet and burst in our honeymoon rooms. we wiped the mess and dressed you in our name and here you are my girls my girls forty quick fingers reaching for the door.

i command you to be good runners to go with grace go well in the dark and make for the high ground my dearest girls my girls my more than me.

Sisters

me and you be sisters we be the same. me and you coming from the same place. me and you be greasing our legs touching up our edges. me and you be scared of rats be stepping on roaches. me and you come running high down purdy street one time and mama laugh and shake her head at me and you. me and you got babies got thirty-five got black let our hair go back be loving ourselves be loving ourselves be sisters. only where you sing i poet.