

Catalog No. 8678

Mother to Son

for Women's Chorus (SA) and Piano

Langston Hughes
(1902–1967)

Gwyneth Walker

Mother to Son is based on the powerful poem by Langston Hughes. The mother (voice) is a strong woman, one who has persevered and is still climbing, still surviving: "Well, son, I'll tell you: / Life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

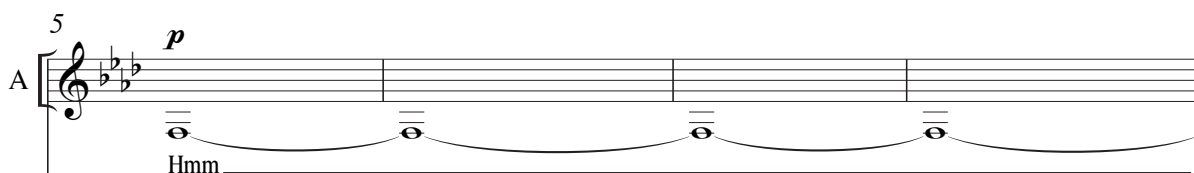
With motion ♩ = 120



p
And. ad lib.

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The right hand features a melody of quarter notes with a dotted half note, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a tempo of 120 beats per minute.

5 *p*
A
Hmm

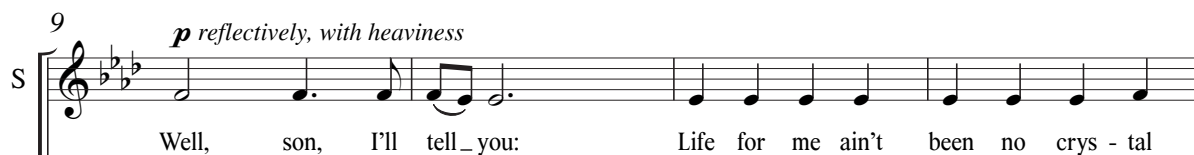


The Soprano soloist part (A) begins at measure 5 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The vocal line consists of a series of whole notes, each with a fermata, representing the sound of humming.



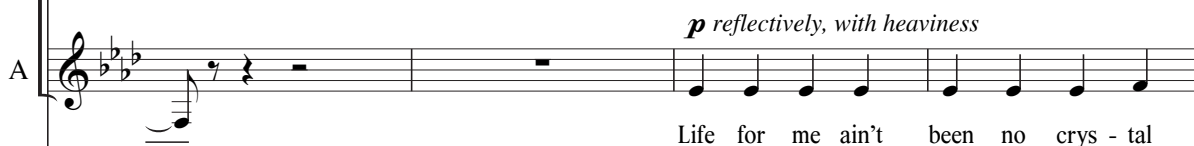
The piano accompaniment continues from the introduction, maintaining the same melodic and harmonic structure.

9 *p reflectively, with heaviness*
S
Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crys - tal



The Soprano soloist part (S) begins at measure 9 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "reflectively, with heaviness". The vocal line consists of quarter notes.

A
p reflectively, with heaviness
Life for me ain't been no crys - tal



The Alto soloist part (A) begins at measure 9 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "reflectively, with heaviness". The vocal line consists of quarter notes.



The piano accompaniment continues from the previous section, maintaining the same melodic and harmonic structure.

A version for Soprano Solo and Piano is also available, Catalog No. 8469.

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13 *unis.*

S
A

stair. It's had

17 *mp* *mf*
div.

S
A

tacks in it, And splin- ters, And boards_ torn_____ up, And

21

S
A

pla - ces with no car - pet on the floor_____

25 *rit.*

S
A

Bare. Bare.

29 *a tempo* (♩ = 120) *unis. p*

S
A

... no crys - tal

33

S
A

stair. But

37 *cresc. poco a poco* *div.*

S
A

all the time I've been a - climb - in' on, And

41 *(cresc.)*

S
A

reach - in' land - in's, And turn - in' cor - ners, And

rit.

Tempo I (♩ = 120)

p

65

S
stair.

A
f been no crys - tal stair. *p*

Tempo I (♩ = 120)

*rit.**p**mf*

(ped.)

(ped.)

(ped.) *ad lib.*

68

S
(p) Ah

A
Ah

71

71

74

S
rit. *p* For I'se still go - in', hon - ey, —

A
rit. *p*

74

S
rit. *p*

A
rit. *p*

77 *accel. cresc.*

S
A

I'se still climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', climb - in', —

accel. cresc.

Slower, more freely

80 *f*

S
A

— and life — for me ain't been no crys - tal, been no crys - tal,

— and life, — been no crys - tal,

f

Slower, more freely

f (ring through m. 84)

And.

84 *rit.* **Tempo I (♩ = 120)**

S
A

been no crys - tal stair, — *p*

been no crys - tal no crys - tal stair, — *mf*

rit. **Tempo I (♩ = 120)**

(f) *dim.*

(*And.*) *And. ad lib.*

88 *(p)*

S no crys - tal stair.

A *p* no crys - tal *(p)*

(dim.)

ped.

91 *rit.*

S

A stair.

rit.

(dim.)

(ped.)

93 *(rit.)* *unis. p*

S

A Mmm

(rit.)

(dim.)

pp

(ped.)