The poem deals with the themes of racism and exclusion.
According to Hughes, what are the various results of excluding African-American men and women from the American Dream?
Note the power in the poem’s voice.

What have been the challenges in the mother’s life as she addresses her son?
What is the advice she gives?
How do you characterize the mother’s voice?
Note the central metaphor that life is no “crystal stair?”
Do you recognize this as an allusion from the Bible?
"Mother to Son": Genesis 28: 10-15

10: Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.
11: And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep.
12: And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!
13: And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants;
14: and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves.
15: Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you. (Bible, Revised Standard Version, Genesis 28: 10-15)