won't you celebrate with me

SUMMARY

Will you join me in rejoicing at what I've been able to make of my life? I never had an example to follow. As a lifelong exile in my own country, a woman of color, what could I aspire to become but my own unique self? I invented my own identity in this world—this middle region between heaven and earth—relying on myself as if holding my own hand. Rejoice with me: I've survived the deadly dangers each day brings.

THEMES

IDENTITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The speaker of Lucille Clifton's "won't you celebrate with me" celebrates the life she's built for herself in the face of long odds. Born "both nonwhite and woman" in a culture dominated by white men—and actively hostile toward other groups—the speaker observes that she "had no model" for the kind of life she should lead. As a result, she could only be herself, defining her own aspirations and relying on her inner strength to achieve them. For marginalized people, the poem suggests, carving out a life and identity of one's own is a feat of lonely heroism, requiring great creativity, self-reliance, and resourcefulness.

The speaker takes pride in the life she's made within a hostile society and a challenging world. She invites others to join her in "celebrat[ing]" the "kind of life" she's "shaped" for herself. Though "a kind of life" sounds more tentative than "a life," she's clearly proud of what she's achieved in spite of all that's stacked against her. In fact, the verb "shaped" makes her sound like a sculptor, an artist of her own destiny.

She further describes herself as "born in babylon," alluding to the exile of ancient Israelites to the city of Babylon. That is, she was born in exile, with no recollection of a homeland (a likely reference to her African-American identity, as the transatlantic slave trade severed many Black families from their African roots). She was also born "both nonwhite and woman"—implicitly, into a racist and misogynist culture. Meanwhile, the world around her is merely a "bridge between / starshine and clay": an intermediate zone between heaven and earth. In this mixed blessing of a world, she asserts, "i made it up"—improvised as she went along.

Under the circumstances, then, she had to invent and become the person she wished to be. With no existing, encouraging pattern to follow, she was forced to fend for herself. As the "shape[r]" of her life, she "had no model"; she was like a sculptor with no point of visual reference. The world was so indifferent or cruel toward people like her that she could *only* "ma[k]e it up": create her own ambitions and form her own character. She's gone through her whole life, she says, with "my one hand holding tight / my other hand": a metaphorical description of self-reliance.

Now, she's asking the reader to help "celebrate" how far she's come. The overall mood of the poem is triumphant, but the triumph is tinged with loneliness and pain; there's something plaintive about asking "won't you celebrate with me." The speaker hopes others will see and affirm the scale of her achievement—and their own, if they've triumphed over similar odds.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-14

RESILIENCE AND SURVIVAL

The speaker of "won't you celebrate with me" isn't just proud of the life and identity she's made for herself; she's proud that she's survived at all. She rejoices in her strength and endurance amid constant threats: "everyday / something has tried to kill me / and has failed." Since this is a somewhat ironic thing to "celebrate," the poem highlights the fundamental harshness of the world, where simply surviving can be a grand achievement. At the same time, the poem genuinely exalts the resilience of the human spirit—and of marginalized women in particular.

The poem's "celebrat[ion]" is shadowed by lament, as the speaker sums up how challenging her experience has been and how hard life in general can be. She calls her life "a kind of life," implying that it's been far from ideal—and may still be less than what she once envisioned. When she describes "my one hand holding tight / my other hand," it's a metaphor not only for self-reliance but for self-protectiveness in the face of danger. Moreover, her situation isn't unique. Her reference to "clay" invokes the biblical idea that humans are made out of clay or earth (and will return to the earth after death). In other words, it gestures toward the humble origins, vulnerability, and mortality of all people, herself included.

In a world like this, the speaker suggests, mere survival can be a victory—one worth celebrating *together*. She rejoices "that everyday / something has tried to kill me / and has failed." Her wording seems to echo a famous line by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "What does not kill me makes me stronger." By invoking this stoic, warrior-like maxim, the speaker claims a kind of proud warrior status. In the end, the poem shifts from the more plaintive "won't you celebrate with me" to the more

affirmative, confident "come celebrate / with me." The speaker invites readers, especially those who've faced her specific struggles ("nonwhite and woman" readers), to share her pride in persevering despite it all.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-3
- Lines 10-14

LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

LINES 1-3

won't you celebrate ...
... kind of life?

Lines 1-3 begin the poem with a rhetorical question. The speaker reaches out to the reader/listener via apostrophe, extending a warm if slightly tentative invitation to "celebrate" with her. This device draws the reader immediately into the speaker's story and circumstances, establishing a kind of intimacy between "you" and "me." That "won't you" could also be read as plaintive, suggesting that the speaker longs for someone to help her "celebrate" an often difficult life.

Small word choices are significant here: notice the difference between celebrating a life and celebrating "a kind of life." The second sounds like a less complete or more ambiguous achievement. This phrasing hints that the speaker's life may have fallen short of her dreams or ideals. (Maybe it's even felt like a kind of *death* at times.) Long /i/ assonance links "kind" and "life," accentuating what turns out to be a key phrase in the poem as a whole. As the speaker will reveal, her life has often been a matter of raw survival. At the same time, she's managed to "shape[]" her own destiny and identity—like a sculptor or similar artist—rather than remaining at the mercy of outside forces.

From the start, the poem contains many features of Lucille Clifton's characteristic style. It's written in short, frequently enjambed, uncapitalized free verse lines. Its language is relatively plain, and its first-person speaker—a stand-in for the poet—uses a modest-looking lowercase "i." Her hedged, questioning language in these opening lines sounds modest as well, but she's ultimately expressing great pride in what she's made of her life.

LINES 3-6

i had no ...
... be except myself?

The poem's opening rhetorical question is followed by a statement: "i had no model." The caesura between the question (which is extended over three lines) and the statement (condensed into half a line) adds dramatic emphasis to the latter. These lineation and punctuation choices also make the statement look *tacked on* to the question, as a kind of explanation. If the speaker has managed to build only a "kind of life," it's because she "had no model" to start with—no blueprint to work from.

Lines 4-6 help clarify her situation. The speaker says she was "born in babylon," alluding to the Babylonian captivity in the 6th and 7th centuries BCE, when the ancient Judeans were exiled from Jerusalem and forced to live in the capital of the Babylonian Empire. This historical incident is also a biblical narrative; Clifton is probably alluding to Psalm 137, for example. But the poem itself isn't set in biblical times. Instead, the speaker means that she was born in a metaphorical "babylon"—born a kind of permanent stranger in a hostile country. That country is implied to be the U.S., where Clifton herself was born.

Why would she feel like an exile in the U.S.? Because she was born "both nonwhite and woman," and so feels doubly oppressed in a racist, misogynist society. Again, it makes most sense to assume the speaker here is Clifton herself. As a Black descendant of enslaved Africans, she feels especially cut off from her ancestors and homeland (as the Jewish people did in Babylon). In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Babylon can also symbolize worldly evil and sin, so her allusion here can be read as a more general condemnation of American society.

Trapped in this society without a "model" to build her life on, the speaker asks: "what did i see to be except myself?" Again, the question is rhetorical: she had no other choice. As a "nonwhite" American woman in the mid-20th century, she wouldn't have seen many celebrated cultural figures who looked like her. At that time, white men actively barred women and Black Americans from many opportunities and discouraged them from success in many fields. (Of course, this discrimination hasn't disappeared in the 21st century, either.) As a result, the speaker had to become her own role model, "shap[ing]" her identity around her own personality and needs.

LINES 7-11

i made it ...
... my other hand;

In lines 7-11, the speaker recalls the difficult process of forming her identity and takes pride in her imagination and resourcefulness along the way. Since she "had no model" for success in life, she could only be "[her]self"—which meant, in practice, that she simply "made it up" as she went along. No easy cultural script was handed to her, so she improvised an identity for herself.

Rather than tying this journey to a specific setting, she situates it on "this bridge between / starshine and clay": in other words, the world we all share as we move between heaven and earth. "Starshine and clay" could also suggest an intermediate zone between the lofty/spiritual and the earthy/physical. In the Book

of Genesis, God forms the human body from clay, so this phrase carries biblical overtones.

It also echoes the phrase "betwixt damnation and impassioned clay," from John Keats's sonnet "On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again." Where Keats's phrase refers to the conflict between human passion and the threat of divine punishment (hell), Clifton's is more about the link or "bridge" between the physical and spiritual. (See the Vocab & References section for more.)

In any case, this metaphorical description could apply specifically to Clifton's *writing*, which bridges the lofty and worldly and certainly helped her form her identity. The speaker may be reflecting not only on her "life" overall but on her development as an artist.

She adds that she proceeded along her life's journey with "my one hand holding tight / my other hand." This could be a metaphor for self-reliance (i.e., she was her own source of strength), self-protectiveness (she was her own source of comfort amid surrounding dangers), or both. Basically, her journey was a lonely and stoic one: she didn't have anyone *else's* hand to hold.

Notice how repetition (the anaphora and parallelism of "my one hand [...] my other hand") and assonance ("my"/"tight"/"my"; "one"/"other") seem to join lines 10 and 11 tightly together. On the level of sound and structure, these lines are as closely linked as the "hand[s]" themselves.

LINES 11-14

come celebrate ...
... and has failed.

Lines 11-14 bring the poem full circle, returning to an emphasis on "celebrat[ion]." After an abrupt caesura marked by a semicolon, the speaker again reaches out to the reader/listener through apostrophe:

> [...] come celebrate
> with me that everyday
> something has tried to kill me
> and has failed.

The shift from "won't you celebrate" to "come celebrate" is small but significant. The growing assertiveness of the speaker's language mirrors her growing self-assurance over the course of her life.

The fact that she hasn't been "kill[ed]" may seem a slightly ironic thing to celebrate. After all, a life in which you face deadly threats "everyday" isn't exactly a peaceful one. Again, Clifton seems to be gesturing toward the racist, sexist society she lives in, the metaphorical "babylon" that constantly endangers people who look like her. Still, she rejoices in the resilience and ingenuity that have helped her survive, as well as the "fail[ure]" of that hostile society to defeat her. And even "a kind of life" (line 3)—an uncertain, difficult existence—is better than death.

Although the ending is triumphant, it carries a trace of anxious realism. The urgency of the speaker's invitation ("come celebrate") conveys a sense that life is precarious—perhaps for her readers as well as herself. She seems to be implying: what hasn't killed us yet may still kill us someday. And "something" kills everyone eventually. All the more reason to seize the day and celebrate now.

POETIC DEVICES

APOSTROPHE

The speaker addresses an unidentified "you," who appears to be the reader or listener. It's possible that she's speaking to a friend or loved one, but given the lack of specific narrative clues here, her invitation ("come celebrate / with me") sounds more general. Because she imagines "you" as a person (not an abstract audience) who is now absent but might "come" join her, her outreach qualifies as apostrophe.

This device helps forge a sense of intimacy, inviting the reader to share the speaker's pride and joy. It may even suggest that the poem is dedicated, especially, to people whose life experience resembles the speaker's (for example, people who understand what it means to be "nonwhite" and female in America). The speaker may be urging such readers toward a "celebrat[ion]" of their own resilience.

The tone of the apostrophe grows subtly bolder over the course of the poem. The speaker initially asks: "won't you celebrate with me / what i have shaped into / a kind of life?" Though the question is rhetorical—it seems to *ask* something but actually *asserts* something—its tone could be read as tentative. In the end, however, the speaker extends a warm, confident invitation: "come celebrate / with me."

Where Apostrophe appears in the poem:

- **Lines 1-3:** "won't you celebrate with me / what i have shaped into / a kind of life?"
- **Lines 11-14:** "come celebrate / with me that everyday / something has tried to kill me / and has failed."

RHETORICAL QUESTION

The poem contains two rhetorical questions. The first of these sounds inviting, plaintive, or both, depending on how it's read:

> won't you celebrate with me
> what i have shaped into
> a kind of life?

The tone establishes an intimate connection with the reader,

but also, perhaps, suggests that the speaker is in *need* of connection—someone to "celebrate with [her]" toward the end of a difficult "life." After noting that she "had no model" for the life she made, the speaker uses a second question to make a point about self-reliance:

> born in babylon
> both nonwhite and woman
> what did i see to be except myself?

Rhetorical questions aren't meant to be answered; they're more like assertions. Here, the speaker asserts that she had no choice but to build her own identity. Because she was a Black woman in the hostile country (the metaphorical "babylon") of America, no cultural blueprint was handed to her. She had to make her own way—or, as the following line says, "ma[k]e it up."

In the second half of the poem, her rhetorical questions give way to confident declarations. This shift mirrors the increasing confidence she gained over the course of her life, as she survived the many things that "tried to kill [her]."

Where Rhetorical Question appears in the poem:

- **Lines 1-3:** "won't you celebrate with me / what i have shaped into / a kind of life?"
- **Lines 4-6:** "born in babylon / both nonwhite and woman / what did i see to be except myself?"

REPETITION

The poem uses repetition to stress the speaker's joy, pride, and strong sense of self.

For example, it repeats the phrase "celebrate with me" three times (in the title, line 1, and lines 11-12). This repetition conveys both exuberance and a kind of insistence, as if the speaker truly wants (or needs) the reader to affirm her victory.

Lines 10-11 incorporate anaphora and parallelism as they repeat the words "my" and "hand":

> my one hand holding tight
> my other hand [...]

These devices join the two lines snugly together, as if to match the image of "one hand" holding the "other." The repetition of "my" also underscores the speaker's self-reliance. As she went on her life's journey, she wasn't "holding tight" to someone *else's* hand: she had to love, protect, and comfort herself. The repetition of "i"—which begins two of the poem's four sentences (lines 3 and 7)—has a similar effect.

Where Repetition appears in the poem:

- **Line 1:** "celebrate with me"
- **Line 2:** "what"
- **Line 3:** "i"
- **Line 6:** "what"
- **Line 7:** "i"
- **Line 10:** "my," "hand"
- **Line 11:** "my," "hand"
- **Lines 11-12:** "celebrate / with me"

CAESURA

The poem contains only two caesuras, but both of them pack a punch. The first appears in line 3, after the speaker's first rhetorical question:

> won't you celebrate with me
> what i have shaped into
> a kind of life? i had no model.

Following a sentence broken over three lines, the four-word sentence "i had no model," squeezed into the second half of a single line, looks *and* sounds abrupt. It's as if the speaker is hastening to explain or justify her claim to "celebrat[ion]." The caesura splits the line in two, signaling a quick mental leap and suggesting the rapid, fragmentary quality of the speaker's thoughts.

The second caesura creates another abrupt segue, this time in the middle of a sentence:

> my other hand; come celebrate
> with me that everyday
> something has tried to kill me
> and has failed.

Again, the caesura indicates a sudden shift from one thought to the next—and challenges readers to infer the connection. The semicolon initially looks strange, like an awkward bridge between two statements that would normally be separate sentences. But on closer inspection, the statements aren't so different. The first expresses the speaker's pride in her own creativity, resourcefulness, and self-reliance. The second invites readers to "celebrate" how those qualities have helped her survive.

Where Caesura appears in the poem:

- **Line 3:** "life? i"
- **Line 11:** "hand; come"

ASSONANCE

Assonance adds emphasis to several of the poem's key words and phrases.

One of these is the speaker's summary of her experience: "a

kind of life" (line 3). The repeated long /i/ sounds help stress the bittersweetness of this phrase. The speaker hasn't necessarily led the life she intended, but she's managed, through great effort, to shape a *kind* of fulfilling life.

Assonance and internal rhyme also accentuate the rhetorical question in line 6:

> what did i see to be except myself?

Combined with iambic pentameter (see Meter section), the cluster of long /i,/ long /e/, and short /e/ sounds draws attention to this thematically important line. The speaker's question is really a bold statement about her individuality: having no other workable "model" for her life, she was forced to create an identity for herself.

Finally, assonance combines with repetition to bind lines 10 and 11 closely together:

> my one hand holding tight
> my other hand; come celebrate

Like the repeated words "my" and "hand," the repeated /i/ and /u/ sounds seem to join these two lines as snugly as the hands themselves. The short /u/ assonance continues with "come," adding weight to a verb that's both instruction and invitation.

Where Assonance appears in the poem:

- **Line 3:** "kind," "life"
- **Line 6:** "see," "be," "except myself"
- **Line 10:** "my," "one," "tight"
- **Line 11:** "my," "other," "come"

VOCABULARY

Babylon (Lines 4-5) - The capital of the ancient Babylonian empire. This line alludes to the Judeans' exile in Babylon during biblical times (see Psalms 137: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion"). The speaker means that she has been born in exile, severed from any connection to her ancestors' homeland (i.e., in Africa).

Starshine (Lines 8-9) - The twinkling of stars in the night sky; metaphorically, heaven.

Clay (Lines 8-9) - The earth, or, metaphorically, the flesh (as in the biblical story of God forming humankind from clay). "This bridge between / starshine and clay" likely alludes to John Keats's line "Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay," from the sonnet "On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again." In Keats's poem, "impassion'd clay" refers to humanity itself, with all its passion.

This bridge (Lines 8-9) - A metaphor for the world the poet inhabits, imagined as an intermediary space between the underworld and the upper world, "clay" and "starshine," earth and heaven.

FORM, METER, & RHYME

FORM

The poem is written in free verse, meaning that it doesn't use a meter or rhyme scheme. However, because it contains 14 lines, it could be described as a nontraditional sonnet.

Free-verse sonnets are sometimes known as "American sonnets." This term was first popularized by the poet Wanda Coleman, who also called them "jazz sonnets." (Coleman explained: "Since jazz is an open form with certain properties—progression, improvisation, mimicry, etc., I decided that likewise the jazz sonnet would be as open as possible, adhering only to the loosely followed dictate of number of lines.") Coleman's *American Sonnets* (1994) came out the year after Clifton's *Book of Light*, in which "won't you celebrate with me" appears. Though Clifton's style is quite different from Coleman's, she may be seeking a similar effect here, infusing the best-known form in English/European poetry with looser, freer rhythms. Meanwhile, her use of all-lowercase letters ("won't you celebrate with me," etc.) draws on the playful experiments of modernism.

Overall, the poem's form fuses the conventional and the experimental, as well as European and African-American poetic traditions. It's a fitting choice for a "nonwhite [...] woman" speaker who has "made [...] up" her own path.

METER

As a free verse poem, "won't you celebrate with me" contains no regular meter. However, it does use some cleverly disguised iambic pentameter—the standard meter of more traditional sonnets.

An iambic pentameter line contains 10 syllables arranged in an unstressed-stressed (da-DUM, da-DUM) rhythm. Line 6 of this poem follows this pattern almost exactly:

> what did | i see | to be | except | myself?

The line begins with a trochee (stressed-unstressed) rather than an iamb (unstressed-stressed), but that's a very common substitution.

The other lines don't follow the pattern as closely: all contain fewer than 10 syllables. However, if the line breaks were altered, lines 8-14 would pretty much become straightforward iambic pentameter:

> here on this bridge between starshine and clay,
> my one hand holding tight my other hand;

come celebrate with me that everyday
something has tried to kill me and has failed.

Thus, Clifton is fusing the traditional and nontraditional, taking a conventional meter and jazzing it up. This style fits the experience and personality of the speaker, who "made it up" rather than following a standard "model."

RHYME SCHEME

The poem has no rhyme scheme; it's written in free verse.

However, it does contain one end rhyme, between "clay" (line 9) and "everyday" (line 12). These rhyme words fall at the ends of phrases that sound a lot like iambic pentameter: "here on this bridge between / starshine and clay"; "come celebrate / with me that everyday." (See the Meter section of this guide for more.) Again, Clifton seems to be folding a few elements of the traditional sonnet into a looser, jazzier, more distinctive poem.

SPEAKER

The speaker is a stoic, independent woman who has made the best of a challenging life.

She was "born [...] nonwhite and woman" into a culture hostile to "both" identities. Metaphorically, she was born into "babylon" (the city of Jewish exile in the biblical period). Since the speaker and the poet appear to be one and the same, this line implies that she was born a Black woman in the U.S.—historically a racist, patriarchal country. Lacking a cultural "model" around which to shape her identity, she saw no choice except "to be [...] myself."

The poem highlights her creativity ("i made it up"), resourcefulness ("i had no model"), and self-reliance or self-protectiveness ("my one hand holding tight / my other hand"). Despite the continual dangers she's faced, she "celebrate[s]" her triumphant survival and invites the reader to do the same.

SETTING

The poem doesn't specify a setting, apart from references to "babylon" and "this bridge between / starshine and clay." Even this indirect language, however, suggests some important context.

"Born in babylon" alludes to the ancient capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, where, according to historical and biblical accounts, the ancient Judeans are said to have lived in exile after the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. In Judeo-Christian tradition, it's synonymous with a place of exile, and often with worldly wickedness. (See, e.g., Psalms 137: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.") The speaker was "born in" a metaphorical, not a literal, Babylon. That is, she lives as a "nonwhite [...] woman" in a country dominated by white men. The fact that she was born into this exile suggests that she has lost all connection to her ancestral homeland. Implicitly, the speaker is a Black American woman, descended from enslaved Africans and cut off from her ancestral ties.

Meanwhile, "this bridge between / starshine and clay" refers metaphorically to the world we all inhabit. The speaker views the human world as a link between the low and the high, the dirt and the heavens. (According to Christian tradition, God formed humankind from "clay," but the human spirit transcends the human body.) This phrase might also suggest that the speaker—who "made [her life] up" as she went along—lives in an *imaginative* world that links the earthy/physical with the spiritual/transcendent.

CONTEXT

LITERARY CONTEXT

Lucille Clifton (1936-2010) is one of the most highly regarded American poets of the late 20th/early 21st century. "won't you celebrate with me" appears in her 1993 collection *Book of Light*, and it has since become one of her best-known poems. Like another signature piece, "homage to my hips," it celebrates Black womanhood with frankness, toughness, and humor.

It also participates in a rich tradition of poetry spotlighting Black American experiences. Partly, this tradition stems from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, a movement that championed the expression of Black culture in the arts. For example, the Harlem Renaissance saw the rise of poetic techniques modeled on the syncopated rhythms found in jazz. Poets like Langston Hughes popularized these techniques, influencing later writers like Gwendolyn Brooks, whose short lines and sharp enjambments in poems like "We Real Cool" (1960) influenced Clifton's style. "won't you celebrate with me" also echoes the spirit of poems such as Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" and "Phenomenal Woman" (1978), whose speakers celebrate the power and beauty of Black femininity.

After a relatively late start to her writing career, Clifton won widespread acclaim for her poetry. Among her many honors were the National Book Award (for *Blessing The Boats: New and Collected Poems 1988–2000*) and an Emmy Award (for her work on the TV show *Free to Be . . . You and Me*).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"won't you celebrate with me" was published toward the end of what's known as second-wave feminism, which began in the 1960s and lasted roughly until the 1990s. This movement surpassed the scope of first-wave feminism, which was centered on political equality and suffrage (the right to vote). Second-wave feminism pushed society toward a broader embrace of gender equality, focusing on sexuality, reproductive

rights, the workforce, family dynamics, and other areas of life that were often shaped by sexism.

The poem was also published almost 30 years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which declared racial segregation illegal. Broadly, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s made inroads for Black Americans in areas such as voting rights, marriage equality (for interracial couples), and access to housing and education. Until this decade, many racist, segregationist Jim Crow laws were still largely in effect in the U.S. (especially in the South). By the 1990s, such overtly discriminatory policies were less common, but neither racism nor misogyny had faded from American life by any means.

These social changes form a general historical backdrop for the poem. More specifically, the speaker of "won't you celebrate with me" derives a sense of power and independence from her identity as a "nonwhite [...] woman." Her remark that "everyday / something has tried to kill me / and has failed" acknowledges not only the struggles of the past but also the persistent dangers facing American women and people of color. Clifton's poems such as "slaveships," "here rests," and "jasper texas 1998" explore these themes from other angles, casting a stark light on racism, misogyny, and related abuses. For example, "here rests" compares the struggles of Clifton's sister and father to the biblical trials of Job.

MORE RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- The Poem Aloud — Listen to Lucille Clifton read "won't you celebrate with me." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM7q_DUk5wU)
- The Poet's Life — Read a biography of Clifton at the Poetry Foundation. (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/lucille-clifton)
- Young on Clifton — Poet Kevin Young discusses what "won't you celebrate with me" has meant to him. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGBOicqbk1o)
- Lucille Clifton at the LOC — Browse the Library of Congress's selection of Clifton recordings and resources. (https://www.loc.gov/item/n79089567/lucille-clifton/)
- Clifton on What Poetry Is — Watch Lucille Clifton comment on the poet's art (video courtesy of the Academy of American Poets). (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfYCRZ9LVh4)
- Interview with the Poet — Read a late-life interview with Clifton (one that quotes from the poem). (https://www.awpwriter.org/magazine_media/writers_chronicle_view/2357/between_starshine_clayan_interview_with_lucille_clifton)

LITCHARTS ON OTHER LUCILLE CLIFTON POEMS

- homage to my hips

HOW TO CITE

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