

Speech to the young,
speech to the
progress-toward



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Bryce Donahue Professor Harsh English 102 16 March 2013 Speech to the Young. Speech to the Progress-Toward The poem "Speech to the Young, Speech to the Progress- Toward" by Gwendolyn Brooks is about keeping your head up and living each day to the fullest. The poem, given the time period, is most likely aimed towards African American people, but can now be related to anyone who may be having a rough day.

Gwendolyn starts off the poem with four specific epithets. Gwendolyn states, "Say to the down-keepers, the sun-slappers, the self-soilers, the harmony-hushers" (398)... All of these epithets are used to describe negative people or someone who will try and get you down. She is trying to say don't listen to what people say just go and live your life. Gwendolyn continues with, "Even if you are not ready for day it cannot always be night" (398).

She tries to use night as a symbol of unhappiness and says if you are not ready to get over what has happened or whatever is making you feel down, you will have to at some point because the day, or happiness, will have to come at some point. Gwendolyn writes, "You will be right. For that is the hard home-run" (398). Gwendolyn uses a home-run to describe something that is hard to obtain, meaning that it will not always be easy to be happy, but you have to fight for it.

Gwendolyn ends her poem with, "Live not for battles won. Live not for the-end-of-the-song. Live in the along" (398). In these final three lines Gwendolyn tries to tell people not to be stuck in the past, but do not try to rush through life, instead live in the moment and enjoy life and all the great things life has to offer. Work Cited Pearson. Backpack Literature: An

Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing. Fourth ed. New Jersey:
Kennedy Gioia, 2010. Print.