

Wishes for sons by lucille clifton

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The paper "Pain and Suffering in Wishes for Sons by Lucille Clifton" is an inspiring example of a book review on literature. Wishes for Sons is a poem about pain and suffering. Lucille Clifton has taken a very compact and self-sufficient approach. One of the aspects of the poem, which will become the subject of this essay, is the voice of the mother resonant throughout. The voice of the speaker can be found to be sore and tender. In that state of mind, she delivers a series of wishes that are directed to sons of men that seem more like curses on them. This could happen to a mother as a result of hurt caused to her by her own child. Hence, the mother's pain and suffering while taking care of her child, is the dominant theme of this poem and we shall elaborate on this theme in the paragraphs to come. Wishes for Sons was written in 1987. The paper will also observe how time has affected the meaning and interpretation of this poem. The poem starts with a wish. At first, the reader thinks the poet is trying to escape from her own frustrations. How can a mother wish ill for her own child? On the second reading, one can see through the speaker's mind, sympathizing with the mother. A mother who carries her child in the womb for nine months stays up days and nights to keep an eye on him, makes sure he does not get hurt, and takes pleasure in each new step her child takes and suffers the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Her grown-up child is an epitome of disobedience and selfishness. The mother is completely torn at this sight. At first, she must wonder if she deserves this kind of treatment from her own flesh and blood. When she fails to answer this troubling question, she starts to lose sanity and in that state of mind she is likely to wish him "cramps" and "strange towns". She wishes him the same pain she had experienced while carrying him inside her. She also wishes that he experiences the difficulties of puberty

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that a female goes through. What she cannot wish for him is death. This is the power of a mother's unconditional love. Even in her most fretful moments, she cannot wish her child to die. This is just like a child who is too eccentric to use coarse language, but calls his elder brother, a mouse or a dragon, for eating his share of ice-cream! They say a mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her own child. Such is the nature of a mother. An example of a mother's love for her child can be seen by an earthquake that struck China, killing more than seventy thousand people (Telegraph 2008). There, beneath the rubble of a house, the rescuers found a body of a mother sheltering her dead child. Today, one only realizes the worth of his relations when it is too late. The damage is already done. These days, children abandon their own parents and arrogantly accusing them of not providing sufficient comfort. To this, the poet tastefully yet honestly adds: let them think they have accepted arrogance in the universe, then bring them to gynecologists not unlike themselves. As though coming right through her heart, the speaker recalls the arrogant gynecologists who are trained to control their emotions because of the kind of substance they have to constantly deal with. The mother wishes that her conceited child is compelled to encounter these professionals, who would teach him a lesson in mannerism.

As a child, I remember how stubborn I was. Being the youngest in the family was not so easy for me. I wanted to pretend I was the eldest and fought with my sisters all the time. Nobody took care of it so I took it for granted and ended up talking to my parents likewise. I argued with them, resisted my mother's friendliness with me, and shouted at them when I did not want to have dinner with them. What still surprises me, is the kindness they showed towards me, to teach me how bad it was to be mulish

all the time. I still feel I have not been able to make an apology to them rightfully. I came across a true story that brought about a significant change in my life. It was about a grownup boy, Willie who belonged to a decent family. But he ran with dangerous gangsters and always cursed the missionaries. His mother never spoke ill of him. His family praised him for his strengths. He would slam the door behind him and never prayed. His mother, however, turned to the missionaries and prayed silently, the ray of hope never losing her sight. Eventually, he became a gentleman and married a stake president's daughter who has raised her entire life in a gospel. His mother always said that heaven would not be heaven without her son.

Lucille Clifton wrote this poem towards the end of the twentieth century, the modern age. It is for this reason that we find *Wishes for Sons* to have resonance with our times. This is the postmodern era, where the concepts of family and relations have almost died. Modern age saw the rise of materialism and industrialization. World Wars had caused enough damage to the human mind and a new world was in the making. Children of today, fail to achieve the essence of life that probably came naturally to their forefathers. Today, the communication gap has grown even wider because the media has taken over the roles of the parents. The present-day generation is in a state of trauma, unable to recover because it has not tried enough. If the speaker spoke to the sons directly, would they be able to hear her? Would they be able to reach out to their mothers and feel their pain? It is possible. Every new generation is better than the one preceding it. There is always hope for a better future. But no word, no sound bite what so ever, can alter the power of the mother who speaks through the poet's heart. It is a wound that has splashed through her body and needs to be healed

tenderly. She would wish her sons "hot flashes" but she will never wish them a parasite's grave.