

### **Notes on Cream of Wheat by Lucille Clifton:**

Brooks reduces all the lessons that this mother must teach her daughter in order to promote her survival and happiness to lessons in gratitude for possessions that are not adequate to nurture Annie's emotional development - Quaker Oates, Cream-of-Wheat, and a penny. In this manner the subject is trivialized and combined with the monotonous doggerel meter. These techniques communicate Brook's criticism of Annie's mother. Moreover, whenever desire surfaces in Annie's consciousness, her response is to suppress this desire. As a result, her anger, resentment, and guilt arise, but these emotions cannot be revealed as well. Consequently, Annie represses all of her emotional responses and denies them expression by flattening them out until only her gratitude is perceptible. These repressed emotions only resurface in her daydreams. But in this imaginary realm, her desire for adventure is transformed into the wish for someone else to enact her plans. Someone else must engage her wish, and this person, we are told, is her husband.