

# Hanging Fire

By Audre Lorde

I am fourteen  
and my skin has betrayed me  
the boy I cannot live without  
still sucks his thumb  
in secret  
how come my knees are  
always so ashy  
what if I die  
before morning  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

I have to learn how to dance  
in time for the next party  
my room is too small for me  
suppose I die before graduation  
they will sing sad melodies  
but finally  
tell the truth about me  
There is nothing I want to do  
and too much  
that has to be done  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

Nobody even stops to think  
about my side of it  
I should have been on Math Team  
my marks were better than his  
why do I have to be  
the one  
wearing braces  
I have nothing to wear tomorrow  
will I live long enough  
to grow up  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

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