



Introductory
Issue

gRAPHic

GWENDOLYN

a song in
the front
yard



Created by Brooks Permissions

gRAPHic GWENDOLYN

ABOUT GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Born in Topeka, Kansas ~ June 7, 1917

The first Black person to ever win the Pulitzer Prize (1950)

Received numerous honorary degrees

Poet Laureate of Illinois (30+ years)

Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress

Ms. Brooks also created/sponsored countless awards for young people and adults

ABOUT BROOKS PERMISSIONS

Founded in 2001, **Brooks Permissions** demonstrates the continued relevance of the life and work of acclaimed writer, Gwendolyn Brooks through licensing, programming, publications, products and services.

presents

a song in the front yard

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Original Piece:

"a song in the front yard"

By Gwendolyn Brooks.

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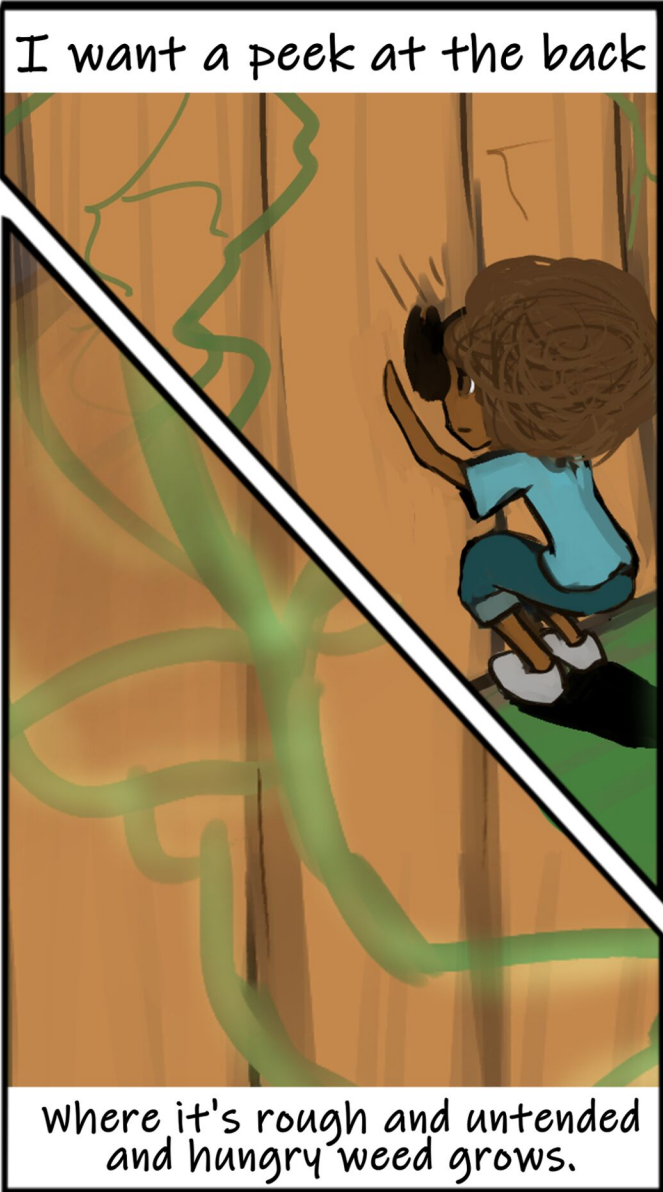
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www.gwendolynbrooks.net

I've stayed in the front yard all my life.

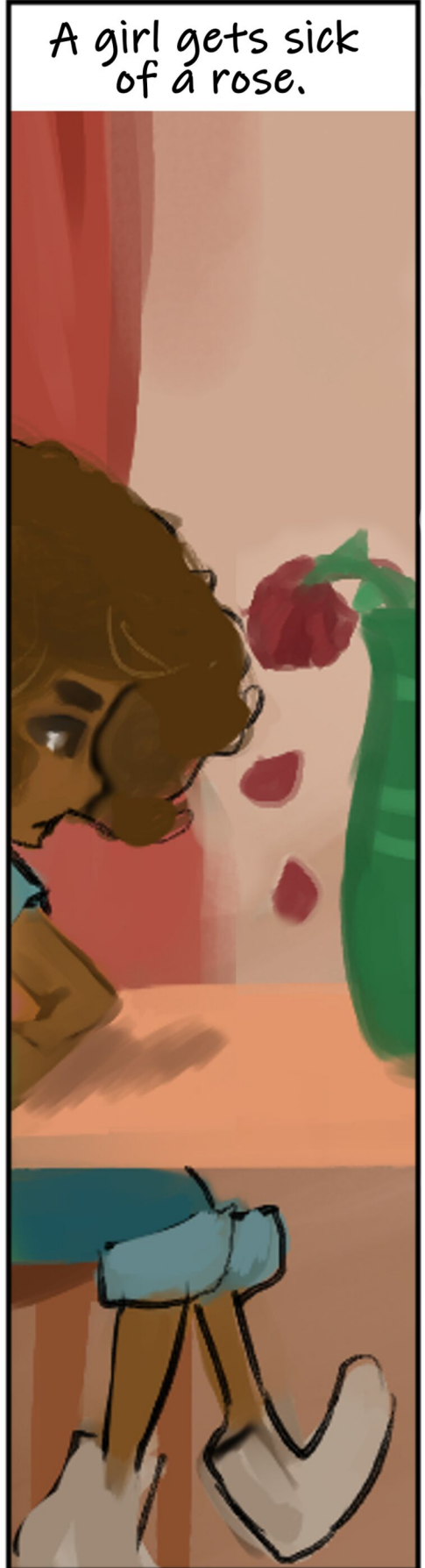


I want a peek at the back



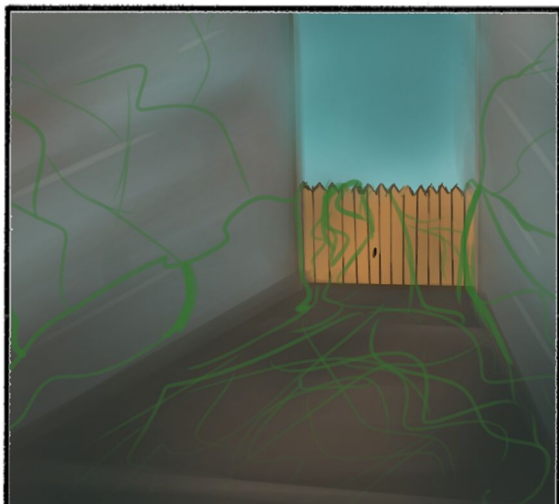
Where it's rough and untended and hungry weed grows.

A girl gets sick of a rose.





I want to go in the back yard now



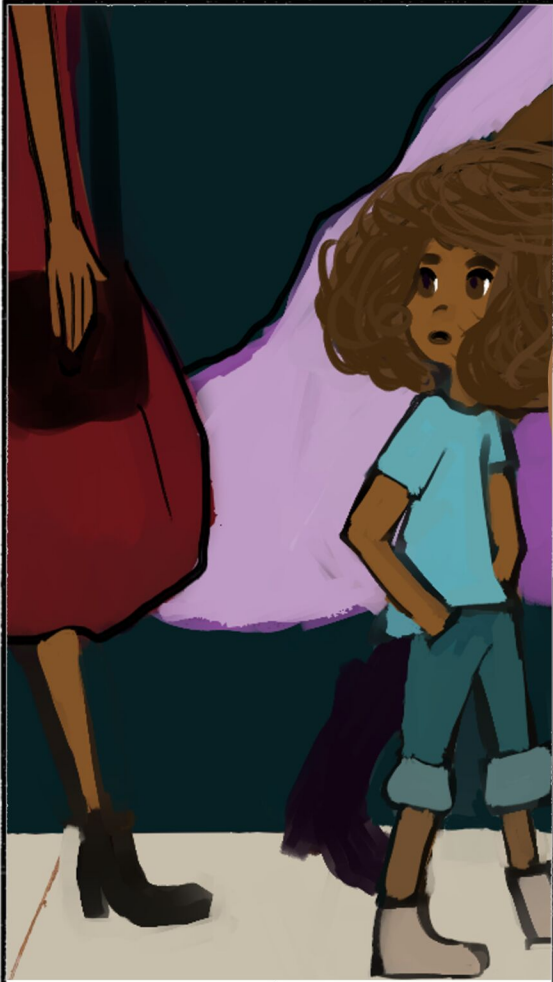
And maybe down the alley,

To where the charity
children play.



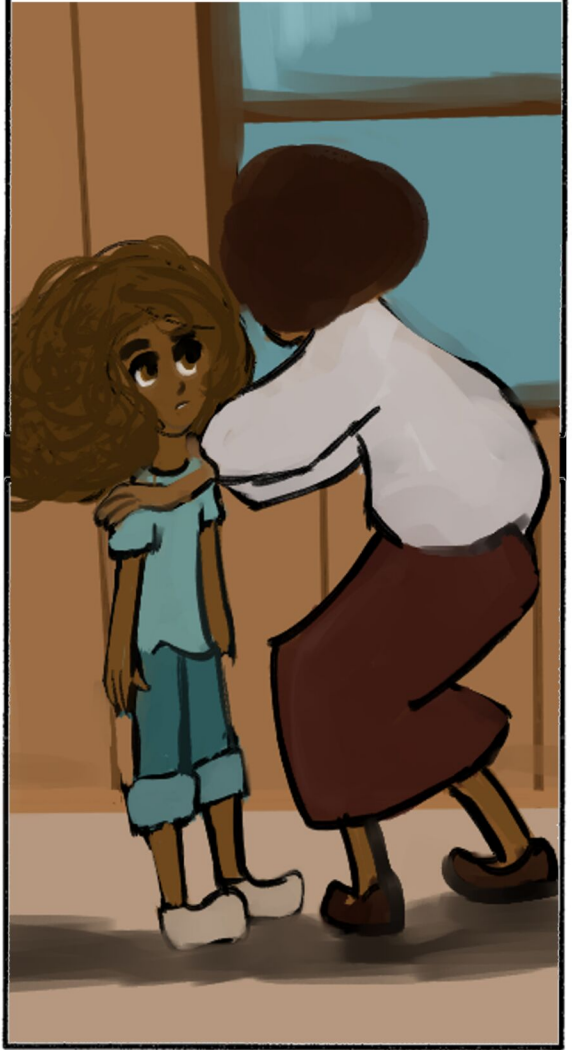
I want a good time today.





They do some wonderful things.
They have some wonderful fun.

My mother sneers,
but I say it's fine



How they don't have to
go in at quarter to nine.



My Mother, she tells me that Johnnie Mae
will grow up to be a bad woman.



That George'll be taken to Jail soon or late
(On account of last winter he sold our back gate.)

But I say it's fine. Honest, I do.



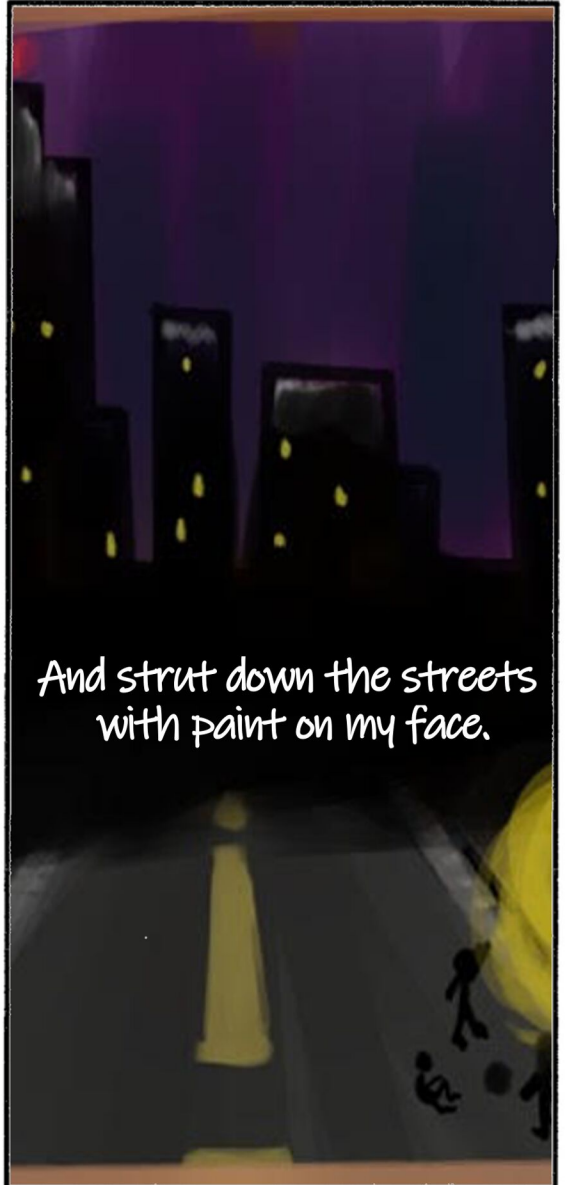
And I'd like to be a
bad woman, too,



And wear the brave stockings
of night-black lace



And strut down the streets
with paint on my face.



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presents

Points to Ponder

Create your own story about
exploring *Different-ness*.

*What are the dangers associated
with the backyard?*

*How old do you think this
young girl is? Why?*

*How do you think she learned about
these "backyard experiences?"*

*Think of a place you haven't been or
allowed yourself to be. Why aren't you
there?*

*Make it a poem, song, skit, folktale,
painting, whatever comes to mind.*



THE REAL FRONT YARD

"The house at 4332 Champlain
Ave. Home, from my fourth year
until the day I was married at the
library table."

~Gwendolyn Brooks

*from the Gwendolyn Brooks archives at
the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at
the University of Illinois, Champaign-
Urbana*

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