“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

(Continued)
Writing Portfolio

In Rudyard Kipling’s poem “If,” the speaker is a father addressing his son. In “Mother to Son,” by Langston Hughes, the speaker is a mother addressing her son. In both poems, the speaker is not the poet himself, but rather a made-up persona through which the poet makes an argument about resilience.

Create a mini-argument in which you form a claim that explains the main difference between these two poets’ views of what makes someone resilient. Use the poems as data for your claim. To help you develop your claim, you may want to use one of the following frames:

Langston Hughes, author of ___________, believes ___________, whereas Rudyard Kipling, author of ___________, believes ___________.

The poems ___________, by ___________, and ___________, by ___________, demonstrate the authors’ differing views on resilience. Their differences can be best understood as ___________ versus ___________.