



Life for Me Ain't Been No Crystal Stair: One Family's Passage Through the Child Welfare System

Susan Sheehan

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On October 7, 1984, Crystal Taylor gave birth to a baby boy whom she named Daquan. Crystal was only fourteen. She was living with a boyfriend whom she was too young to marry, and her mother was addicted to heroin and cocaine. So under the law, Crystal and Daquan became wards of New York State's foster-care system—a sprawling, often slipshod web of boarding facilities, halfway houses, and paid surrogates that cares for almost 60,000 children.

Life for Me Ain't Been No Crystal Stair is the story of what happened to Crystal and Daquan, as well as to Crystal's mother, who herself had grown up in various foster homes. It is a story of three generations of poverty, addiction, and abuse—and also a story of astonishing human resilience. And Susan Sheehan tells it with the same flawless observation, humor, and compassion that she brought to her classic *Is There No Place on Earth for Me?*

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