

Caged Bird by Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird
sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
an the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Discussion Questions for Caged Bird

1. Paraphrase the poem.
2. What do you think the poem is attempting to do? Educate the reader, create nostalgia , or fear, evoke a mood, etc? Is the poet effective?
3. Who is the speaker? What kind of person is the speaker?
4. Can you identify the author's intent/purpose? You may also describe this as the theme or "message" of the poem.
5. Discuss the imagery of the poem. What kinds of imagery are used?
6. Point out examples of metaphor, simile, personification, or any other literary device and explain their significance and/ or appropriateness. Also point out significant examples of sound repetition and explain their function.

