



I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings

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
and 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.

Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou (Marguerite Annie Johnson) was born on April 4th 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. and died at the age of 86 on May 28th 2014 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, U.S.A. She was a poet, civil rights activist, television producer, playwright, film director, author, actress and professor. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, and several books of poetry. She received dozens of awards and over fifty honorary degrees. She was married to Tosh Angelos from 1951-1954 and Paul du Feu from 1973-1981. She is best known for her seven autobiographies, the first one being *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* which tells of her life up to the age of seventeen. Before she became a poet and a writer she had a series of occupations as a young adult, including fry cook, prostitute, nightclub dancer and performer, cast member of the opera *Porgy and Bess*, coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and journalist in Egypt and Ghana during the decolonization of Africa.

This poem is about racial discrimination. The caged bird is an African-American man or woman and the free bird is white. Maya Angelou is describing how she was the caged bird because she was an African-American woman and the 'free bird' was white, limiting her freedom of expression, causing her to feel locked away and ignored because of her skin colour. The worms and the breeze represents hope and opportunity and the constantly repeated phrase 'His wings are clipped and his feet are tied so he opens his throat to sing' means, despite being denied freedom there is still hope. Also implying the bird will continue to persevere and not give up, singing about hopes and dreams.

R

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair;
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as far the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning had equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads onto ways,
I doubted if I should have ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

—Robert Frost

Robert Frost

Robert Lee Frost was an American poet born in San Francisco, California on March 26th 1874 and died on January 29th 1963 in Boston, Massachusetts at the age of 88. He was married to Elinor White from 1895-1938 (when she died) and had six kids, Eliot, Lesely, Carol, Irma, Marjorie and Elinor Bettina. In 1894 he sold his first poem entitled "My Butterfly, An Elegy" published on November 8th. He was so proud of his accomplishment he proposed to Elinor Miriam White. However, she rejected the offer until she had graduated from college so when he had returned from a trip to Virginia he proposed again and they got married on December 19th 1895. He attended Harvard University from 1897 to 1899, but he left voluntarily due to illness.

The Road Not Taken

The meaning of this poem is he comes across a fork in the path in the middle of a forest. Both paths are covered in leaves but one path seems to be more wild and over-grown. In reality both the paths are about equally worn. He wishes he could go both ways then decides to take the one he thinks is less worn and says he will save the other for another day. Although making plans to go back to the other path for another day he suspects he probably won't ever come back. So instead he talks about how sometime far off into the future his decision was final and life-changing.

U

Online Classic

-Up-Hill

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

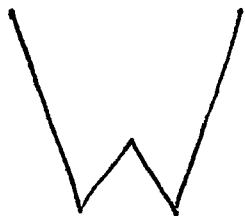
-Christina Rossetti



The meaning I get from this is that on your life's journey you will find places you belong. You will find people who share knowledge. You will also make friends.

My connection to this is how I look at life. I always have tons of questions but there's always an answer, and a good one. It also reminds me to not worry about anything because there are things to help you. In this case it's the inn.

Christina Rossetti is a very famous poet who was born on December 5, 1830. She is best known for her religious poems. Most poems written by Christina are very powerful and convey strong feelings and senses. Someone who is becoming more popularly connected to her is Emily Dickinson. On December 29, 1894 Christina Rossetti passed away.



Classic Poem

Will o' the Wisp

By: Jack Prelutsky

Title of book: Nightmares: Poems to trouble your sleep

You are lost in the desolate forest
where the stars give a pitiful light,
but the faraway glow of the will o' the wisp
offers hope in the menacing night.

It is lonely and cold in the forest
and you shiver with fear in the damp,
as you follow the way of the will o' the wisp
and the dance of its flickering lamp.

But now as you trudge through the forest
toward the glistening torch in the gloom
that the eerie allure of the will o' the wisp
summons you down to your doom.

It will lead you astray in the forest
over ways never traveled before
If ever you follow the will o' the wisp
you'll never be seen anymore



The forest represents life and the will o' the wisp is your greatest desire
If you travel through life searching for what you want you may
get lost and lose a handle on your life.

Sometimes I need to sit down and think about what I truly want
because I could end up "lost!"

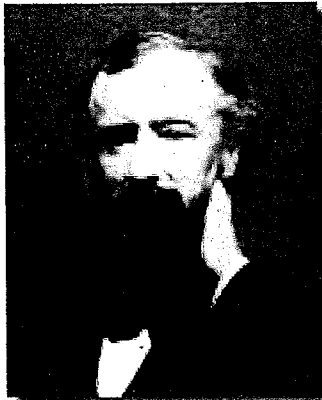
J

John Burroughs

i still find each day too short for all the thoughts i want to think,
all the walks i want to take
and all the books i want to read,
and all the friends i want to see

John burroughs was a natural essayist and poet, he was born in
new york on April 3rd 1837 and died in Ohio on March 29th 1921.

I relate to this poem because I frequently find myself having the day
end before i'm done with the day.



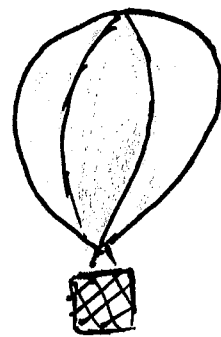
O

Oh the Places
you'll go

Dr. Seuss

Congratulations, today is your day
you're off to great places
you're off and away.

you have brains in your head
and feet in your shoes
you can steer yourself
any direction you choose
you're on your own,
you know what you know
And you are the guy
whom all decide where you go



Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel) was an American
writer and cartoonist. He was Born March 2nd 1904
And passed away Sept. 24th 1991

I relate to this poem because my mom used to
read me this when I was a baby