

Caged Bird

by Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
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 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.

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
graves of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare
scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are
tied
so he open his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful thrill
of things unknown

but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Angelou, Maya. *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing*. Random House: New York, 1983.