

# Sympathy

By Paul Laurence Dunbar (published 1899)

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!

When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;  
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,  
And the river flows like a stream of glass;

(5) When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,  
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—  
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing

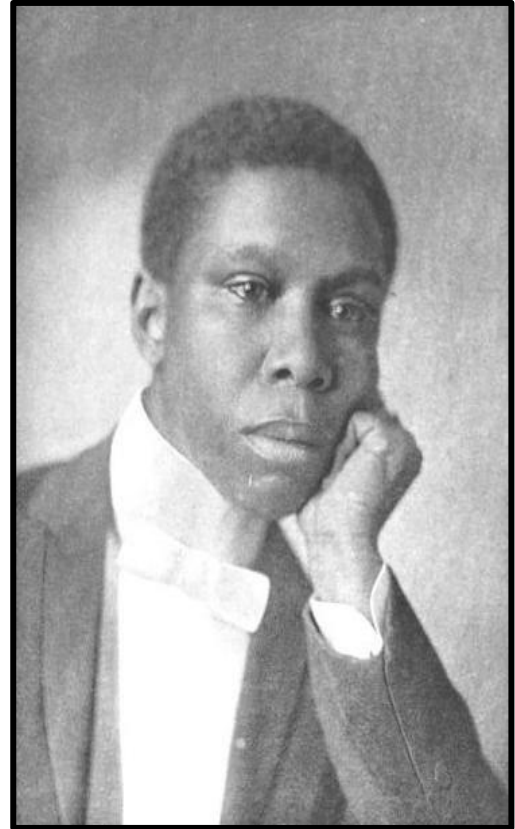
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;  
(10) For he must fly back to his perch and cling  
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;

And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars  
And they pulse again with a keener sting—  
I know why he beats his wing!

(15) I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,

When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—  
When he beats his bars and he would be free;  
It is not a carol of joy or glee,

But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,  
(20) But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—  
I know why the caged bird sings!



## Vocabulary

alas! –

bough -

opes-

keener -

chalice –

bosom-

perch –

glee -



# Caged Bird

By Maya Angelou (1983)

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
(5) and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

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

(15) The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
(20) 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  
(25) 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  
(30) so he opens his throat to sing.

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



Bird in stanza 1

Bird in stanza 2 & 3

Identify effective examples of imagery:

