**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 is tune is heard  
on the distant hillfor 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.

**The Courage That My Mother Had** by Edna St. Vincent Millay

The courage that my mother had  
Went with her, and is with her still:  
Rock from New England quarried;  
Now granite in a granite hill.

The golden brooch my mother wore  
She left behind for me to wear;  
I have no thing I treasure more:  
Yet, it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she'd left to me  
The thing she took into the grave!-  
That courage like a rock, which she  
Has no more need of, and I have.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Define courage in your own words. Provide an example of courage from your own life and/or an example of courage that you witnessed.

2. Reflecting on your own life, what personality trait do you feel people admire about you?

3. Thinking about the people close to you (friends, family, etc), who is someone that you admire? What qualities do you admire about them?