



I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings

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.

symbolism

A bird symbolises freedom

Maya Angelou was raped and this poem is about how the rapist affected her for a long time afterwards. The bird is the rapist and the wing dipping is a metaphor for the sexual invasion where she was the like the sun, full of warmth.

peBut 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

metaphor

The bars are not made of rage but the poet draws a connection between how she feels trapped by her feelings so a caged bird might feel anger at being held inside a cage.

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.

symbol

The caged bird is a symbol of freedom being taken away. It gives the idea of entrapment.

rhyme

The triple rhyme suggests a harmony that the caged bird yearns for.

repetition

The idea of the bird being caged is repeated to emphasize the effect to make the reader sympathetic towards the bird and its situation.

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

personification

The trees are given the human quality of sighing to represent the bird's sorrowful feelings.

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.

metaphor

The bird cage is compared to a grave where the bird is 'buried' and unable to fly free and achieve its dreams of freedom.

personification

The shadow suggests the part of a person that lives away from the sunlight. It is given the human quality to show how she wants to shout out.

alliteration

The only use of alliteration in the whole poem using the 's' sound to soothe herself and see that her attacker has a prison of his own.

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repetition

The pioet repeats the whole verse to again emphasize the feeling of being trapped.

rhyme

The triple rhyme again suggests a harmony that the caged bird yearns for. It is repeated to emphasize the point.