



HARMONIUM CHORAL COMPOSITION CONTEST 2024

WHAT DOES BE BRAVE MEAN TO YOU?

There are seven poems written by students who have participated in or participate still in Her Words and four public domain poems for you to choose to set music.

We have collaborated with Her Words for them to create poems based on what this theme means to them. Her Words is a creative arts and mentoring program offering free workshops in the arts, expressive writing, and wellness for underserved teen girls and gender-expansive youth ages 11-16. They share their stories, shape their future, and are empowered to create change in their lives and communities. It is a partnership program between Morris Arts and Morris School District. For more information about Her Words go to:

<https://www.morrisarts.org/her-words/>

Arielle and Savannah are 12 years old, Alexa is 14 years old, and Anastasia is 16 years old.

HER WORDS POEMS

1. BRAVERY BY ARIELLE ADAMS

Be strong, lift your head high.

Don't let anyone knock you off your feet if they do fly to the sky.

I know it is rough,

Just stand up and be tough.

I know I have some fear,

But I am not worried because bravery is near.

I know I'm scared, but I'll take a challenge.

If I take a step, I know I'll find my balance.

2. BRAVERY BY ALEXA ADAMS

Today I'm learning how to fly.

Mama bird is leaving me behind,
I'm really scared I don't wanna die.
But mama says I have to try.
I'm going to flap my wings one last time,
So, in hopes I learn how to fly.

3. BRAVERY POEM # 2 BY ALEXA ADAMS

Someday I'll be brave, but not now, not today.
Bravery is taking a step forward into you don't know will succeed.
Life is not about being perfect that's bravery,
Everyone has something that they fear.
But we all must overcome it by the end of the year.
Bravery is as big as the ocean blue,
But there is something we must do to overcome those waves.
Bravery is like a big tree,
Cutting off the bad roots will set you free.

4. BRAVERY BY ANASTASIA ADAMS

Take a stand for what is right,
Open your wings and take flight.
Never let them people say no,
Stand up and say yes, I am, I will today.
Bravery is standing up for what is right,
Put on your big girl pants and hold on tight.

I look at myself and see me,
I must stand up and become free.
I may be sad,
I may be mad,
But I will rise up and be glad.

5. BRAVERY - BY SAVANNAH PAUL

I can't, I say but really, I can,
But I can be brave like a newborn.
Turtle crawling on the sand,
I can't say shivering in fear,
But I'll take the risk like a deer.
I may be scared,
Bravery is taking risks.
It's not I don't know, or I can't,
Its I'll try or I can.
Bravery is not being afraid,
It's not I'm scared, or I don't want to
Its I'll face my fears,
Bravery is being strong.
And that is me,
I can't I say shivering in fear,
But I'll take the risk like a deer.
I'm scared I think I'm not worthy,
But my friend tells me not to worry.

I watch them laugh at me,
All slapping their knee,
So, I feel like a bee,
Wanting to sting them for judging me.
After that I'm like a bull,
Standing up made me feel less dull.

6. PUPPETEER - BY H. COCHRAN

I am the puppet, just moving to everyone's commands. The strings are the stereotypes that keep me captive, the fear of others, of my breaking free. Of my friends that won't know how to react when they figure out the real me. When I figure it out.

But I am done hiding behind their eyes, balancing on a line, unsteady. I want to jump; I want scissors through my strings-- so I can be a snowflake, not always there and the same. I want to tell you all that I am bi, as I say it now. And tell you all that I am yet to be discovered, but I am not lost. I want to tell you that sometimes it's easier to hide, to let others speak—but it is not honest; it does not bring relief and trust and courage. So I'll tell you to stand up or to break down, so you can build yourself up stronger—get on your feet and trust your secrets and open your mouth and strut down the sidewalk and don't look at everyone watching you, your body, your eyes.

Your hands; what do you do with your hands as you stand on the street corner in the "bad" part of town, waiting for your dad to get out of the liquor store behind you? Just be confident, that's all.

Look at yourself with no judgement. Only see yourself.

I will hug that tree, randomly—hear its pain. Withering, as it

seems to grow. Curling roots and crashing trunks; invisible. I cannot live if I cannot grow as myself. If nobody understands that I am the stars and the sky and my scars; a butterfly. Wings, hurt, confusion, confession, lamppost, love, happy. Broad and true; there is nothing they can do. I am in control.

I am here. I am infinitely my own.

I am my own puppeteer.

7. LOVE - BY H. COCHRAN

Stars spilling out of my mouth

Sometimes sparking

Most times thudding strangely to the ground,
dark and heavy.

That is the thing with words

They are just as dangerous as silence.

But words, they are brave too.

Or safe

Stitching up your scars with lace

Wrapping your entirety in

yammering about the Gilmore Girls and chipped nails,
and silly questions that no one really cares about.

Likely don't remember.

Chen Chen wrote about silence too

In "Kafka's Axe & Michael's Vest"

"I've been thinking," he said,

"About how the world is actually unbearable.

About all those moments of silence we're supposed to take.

Each year, more moments, less life..."

Silence is screaming

"Speaking," he also said, "is a house
that dresses your life in the tidiest wallpaper.

It makes your grief sit down...

It keeps your rage room temperature."

We speak, but we do not tell anything

Or we do,

But not how silence does.

Speak.

Cordelia, speak—

Open your mouth and dust out the cobwebs;

Strings that have kept you so tied up

In your head.

Sick of fickle things

And keeping yourself shut.

Your stuffed animals don't actually listen to you
when you talk to your ceiling in bed.

Speak, Cordelia.

Speak and be heard.

Speak to humans, that's not so hard right?

Say some of the real things you wrote

Claim what had you broken.

Spill the stars

I promise

Darkness is a thousand times better with light.

The meteors might tumble, roll awkwardly on the floor—

But at least they've landed.
And hey, they might even float.
And one day
I promise
Someone will catch them.
Understand them.
Understand you.
Love them.
That is the thing with words
They lead to love.
Love, Cordelia,
Love.

POEMS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

1. MAY NIGHT - BY SARA TEASDALE

The spring is fresh and fearless
And every leaf is new,
The world is brimmed with moonlight,
The lilac brimmed with dew.
Here in the moving shadows
I catch my breath and sing--
My heart is fresh and fearless
And over-brimmed with spring.

2. PSALM 3: 1-8

King James Version This may be set in any translation or language or selected verses

1 Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

2 Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

3 But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

4 I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

7 Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

3. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON - BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

The word is writ that he who runs may read.

What is the passing breath of earthly fame?

But to snatch glory from the hands of blame--

That is to be, to live, to strive indeed.

A poor Virginia cabin gave the seed,

And from its dark and lowly door there came

A peer of princes in the world's acclaim,

A master spirit for the nation's need.

Strong, silent, purposeful beyond his kind,

The mark of rugged force on brow and lip,

Straight on he goes, nor turns to look behind

Where hot the hounds come baying at his hip;

With one idea foremost in his mind,

Like the keen prow of some on-forging ship.

4. INVICTUS - BY WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the pit from pole to pole,

I thank whatever gods may be

for my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance

I have not winced nor cried aloud.

Under the bludgeonings of chance

My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears

Looms but the Horror of the shade,

And yet the menace of the years

Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,

How charged with punishments the scroll,

I am the master of my fate:

I am the captain of my soul.