



# 10 POEMS THAT KEEP ME MOTIVATED

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## A Psalm of Life

**By: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1882)**

*What the heart of the young man said to the psalmist*

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream! --  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each to-morrow  
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of Life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act, -- act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

## God Moves in Mysterious Ways

**By: William Cowper (1731 – 1800)**

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill,  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for his grace;  
Behind a frowning providence,  
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain.

# If

**By: Rudyard Kipling (1865 - 1936)**

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too:  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same:  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,  
And never breathe a word about your loss:  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much:  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

## Desiderata

By: Max Ehrmann (1872 – 1945)

Go placidly amid the noise and haste,  
and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender  
be on good terms with all persons.  
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;  
and listen to others,  
even the dull and the ignorant;  
they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons,  
they are vexations to the spirit.  
If you compare yourself with others,  
you may become vain and bitter;  
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.  
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble;  
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs;  
for the world is full of trickery.  
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;  
many persons strive for high ideals;  
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself.  
Especially, do not feign affection.  
Neither be cynical about love;  
for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment  
it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years,  
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.  
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.  
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.  
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.  
Beyond a wholesome discipline,  
be gentle with yourself.



You are a child of the universe,  
no less than the trees and the stars;  
you have a right to be here.  
And whether or not it is clear to you,  
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,  
whatever you conceive Him to be,  
and whatever your labors and aspirations,  
in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,  
it is still a beautiful world.  
Be cheerful.  
Strive to be happy.

## How Did You Die?

**By: Edmund Vance Cooke (1866 – 1932)**

Did you tackle that trouble that came your way  
With a resolute heart and cheerful?  
Or hide your face from the light of day  
With a craven soul and fearful?  
Oh, a trouble's a ton, or a trouble's an ounce,  
Or a trouble is what you make it,  
And it isn't the fact that you're hurt that counts,  
But only how did you take it?

You are beaten to earth? Well, well, what's that!  
Come up with a smiling face.  
It's nothing against you to fall down flat,  
But to lie there-that's disgrace.  
The harder you're thrown, why the higher you bounce  
Be proud of your blackened eye!  
It isn't the fact that you're licked that counts;  
It's how did you fight-and why?

And though you be done to the death, what then?  
If you battled the best you could,  
If you played your part in the world of men,  
Why, the Critic will call it good.  
Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,  
And whether he's slow or spry,  
It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,  
But only how did you die?

## Still I Rise

**By: Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014)**

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

## Invictus

**By: William Ernest Henley (1849 - 1903)**

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.

## Barter

**By: Sarah Teasdale (1884 - 1933)**

Life has loveliness to sell,  
All beautiful and splendid things,  
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,  
Soaring fire that sways and sings,  
And children's faces looking up  
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,  
Music like a curve of gold,  
Scent of pine trees in the rain,  
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,  
And for your spirit's still delight,  
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,  
Buy it and never count the cost;  
For one white singing hour of peace  
Count many a year of strife well lost,  
And for a breath of ecstasy  
Give all you have been, or could be.

## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

By: Robert Frost (1874 - 1963)

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

## Don't Quit

**By: John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 – 1892)**

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,  
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,  
When the funds are low and the debts are high  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
    When care is pressing you down a bit,  
    Rest if you must, but don't you quit.  
Life is strange with its twists and turns  
    As every one of us sometimes learns  
    And many a failure comes about  
When he might have won had he stuck it out;  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—  
    You may succeed with another blow.  
    Success is failure turned inside out—  
    The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,  
And you never can tell just how close you are,  
    It may be near when it seems so far;  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—  
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.



## Bonus: कोशिश करने वालों की हार नहीं होती

By: सोहनलाल द्विवेदी (1906 - 1988)

लहरों से डर कर नौका पार नहीं होती  
कोशिश करने वालों की हार नहीं होती

नन्हीं चींटी जब दाना लेकर चलती है  
चढ़ती दीवारों पर, सौ बार फिसलती है  
मन का विश्वास रगों में साहस भरता है  
चढ़कर गिरना, गिरकर चढ़ना न अखरता है  
आखिर उसकी मेहनत बेकार नहीं होती  
कोशिश करने वालों की हार नहीं होती

डुबकियां सिंधु में गोताखोर लगाता है  
जा जा कर खाली हाथ लौटकर आता है  
मिलते नहीं सहज ही मोती गहरे पानी में  
बढ़ता दुगना उत्साह इसी हैरानी में  
मुट्ठी उसकी खाली हर बार नहीं होती  
कोशिश करने वालों की हार नहीं होती

असफलता एक चुनौती है, स्वीकार करो  
क्या कमी रह गई, देखो और सुधार करो  
जब तक न सफल हो, नींद चैन को त्यागो तुम  
संघर्ष का मैदान छोड़ मत भागो तुम  
कुछ किये बिना ही जय जय कार नहीं होती  
कोशिश करने वालों की हार नहीं होती

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