

I really did have a parakeet named Charlie and he was not very nice, but his crimes were limited to repeatedly screeching at me and my father and biting my fingers whenever I added water to or cleaned his cage.

He was the only nasty bird I ever had. His polar opposite was a great and friendly parakeet that my sister raised. His name was Tiny Tim. Charlie was mostly blue and TT was mostly green. I'm not sure that affected their moods. TT used to land on my finger and fake-box with me. He loved landing on my shoulder and showing me bird emotions.

The irony came in the final time I saw each of them: Charlie flew out an open kitchen window (mistake?) and Tiny Tim flew out our front door in my sister's marine housing when a sudden gust of wind blew the screen door open. (It should have been closed with a hook.) That was a tragedy.

I salute Maya Angelou's "Caged Bird" --- even though I understand her extended metaphor very well and agree with the strongly expressed sentiment absolutely

Caged Bird

by [Maya Angelou](#)

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.

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 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.

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

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.