

Harriet Tubman- Slavery

Based from the true story of Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, enduring physical abuse from the age of 5. Grew up to become a leading abolitionist and conductor who successfully helped over 300 people safely escape from slavery via the underground railroad. All quotes from the poem inside the speech marks (“ ”) are direct quotes from Harriet Tubman which are embedded into the poem to reflect a personal take on Harriet’s Story.

“Slavery is the next thing to hell” ...

Decayed, decomposed toes desperately hung onto her feet,
The pungent odour of rotting flesh, disintegration of rotting meat.
Her ebony epidermis, as delicate as a rose
was lacerated and ruptured, blood flowing from her pores.
Her brave soul confronted the pummelling, ineluctable heat,
Scorching rays were an effortless momentum to the torture she would inevitably meet.
Her struggles were a monotonous warzone, and her thoughts were inconsequential
Her mind assaulted beyond physical endurance, limiting her potential.
Clothed in rags of stained material, hanging from her bony collar
A victim of malnutrition and starvation causing her eyes to lose colour.
Her trembling lips were sealed by terror, her mind was trapped by fear
To “reach” seemed merely impossible, the “stars” were far too unclear.
She was dehumanised and contaminated by mentally polluting names
But their futile attempts to degrade a “dreamer” were all carried out in vain
To adhere to the provocative abuse, meant to be “ignorant of liberty”,
But she was rooted with a “passion”, driving herself to be free.
As a minor, she was programmed- she knew no other way of life
But her youthful mind became enticed with what lay on the other side.

“Bravest”, “Hell”, “Hardships” ...

She was 1 of 8 children, born under commands of the prestigious fair skinned,
Causing detrimental damage to the child, who was deprived of her rights of living.
One day, she refused her superior, declaring her noble demeanour
Until she was struck to the head with a 2-pound weight, causing permanent, irregular
seizures.
She was only defending her rights to freedom, at a vulnerable, delicate age,
Consequences included narcolepsy, seizures and scars on her brain.
Another trauma occurred soon after, when she was lashed 5 times with a cane,
The “scars” are within her for the rest of her life, indelibly engraved on her brain.
Through the emotional war, she struggled, but didn’t stop her determination,
Battling the living “hell” she was trapped in, conquering her frustration.

“Dream”, “Spirit”, “Freedom” ...

The midnight sky and the silent stars have been witnesses to her commitment,
The “heaven” of which she craved was becoming less and less distant.

The more pain she endured, the more hope she had, bringing her closer to home,
Every night she would “dream” about freedom, though it seemed “strange” and unknown.

Years later... 1850-1860...

Years of suffering and abuse had seemingly passed but she finally discovered a way,
To take her family out of slavery and escape... the underground railway.
A complex network of secret tunnels to keep their identities protected
Slaves were going missing and leaving their owners, it seemed highly suspected.
But she wouldn't let authorities sabotage her escape, she had been abused for too long,
As a successful conductor of the underground railroad, her vision was clear and strong.
After monotonous years of labour and struggle, scars etched on her brain like a painting
She was tired of repressing her pain, sick of endless nights of waiting.
Now, the whistling of the train soothes her, and provokes gratitude to a successful rebel,
The scratching of the wheels on the rusty metal frames, assures her that she's further away
from her “hell”.
She didn't just consider her own agony though, she empathised with those still in pain,
Making a motive to save “thousands of slaves”, over and over again.
Nineteen trips from the South to the North, transporting carriages of many in captivity,
She worked tirelessly to save captured families, on route to the “land of liberty”.
Her plan effectuated flawlessly, she “never lost a passenger” or failed to offer help,
The escapes were victorious, triumphantly carried out for the wellbeing of everyone else.
Overall, she freed over three hundred slaves during her remarkable time as a conductor
Her efforts deserve a commemoration- she didn't let slavery confront her.

In 2019, over one hundred years later and her name is still reflected,
Harriet Tubman, abolitionist and conductor, one who deserves to be respected.