



## Oh Captain! My Captain!

**Walt Whitman was a 19<sup>th</sup> century journalist and poet, most famous for his lyrical poems and verses describing nature. He was also a volunteer nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War. Whitman penned the elegy (mourning poem) below in 1865 in honor of his hero, Abraham Lincoln.**

**Who is your hero or “Captain?” Read the poem below to get a sense of the anguish Walt Whitman felt upon learning of Lincoln’s assassination. Then, pen a short “Oh Captain! My Captain” poem about your hero. See the example on the second page.**

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
Here Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck,  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;  
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!  
But I with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

**Your Captain:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your poem does not have to be an elegy and probably should not be. It can be about his or her current life, accomplishments, or why your “captain” is special.**

**EXAMPLE (Benjamin Franklin)**

**Oh Captain! My Captain! You wrote an almanac;**

**You invented sayings, you printed papers, you traced our country’s track;**

**From Boston, Mass. to Paris, France, you stood up for our nation;**

**In the war, you argued for, America’s creation.**

**YOUR POEM**

**Oh Captain! My Captain!** \_\_\_\_\_

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