|  |
| --- |
| **O Captain My Captain a poem by Walt Whitman**  |
|

|  |
| --- |
| http://www.poetry-online.org/images/flower-1.jpg |

 | **O Captain my Captain! our fearful trip is done,The ship has weathered 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 ribboned 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 anchored 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.**    |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

 |

## Tuesday, April 3, 2007

### [The Frog and the Nightingale](http://rajeevdreams.blogspot.com/2007/04/frog-and-nightingale.html)

This is my favourite poem. It is written by Vikram Seth.

Once upon a time a frog
Croaked away in Bingle Bog
Every night from dusk to dawn
He croaked awn and awn and awn
Other creatures loathed his voice,
But, alas, they had no choice,
And the crass cacophony
Blared out from the sumac tree
At whose foot the frog each night
Minstrelled on till morning night

Neither stones nor prayers nor sticks.
Insults or complaints or bricks
Stilled the frogs determination
To display his heart's elation.
But one night a nightingale
In the moonlight cold and pale
Perched upon the sumac tree
Casting forth her melody
Dumbstruck sat the gaping frog
And the whole admiring bog
Stared towards the sumac, rapt,

And, when she had ended, clapped,
Ducks had swum and herons waded
To her as she serenaded
And a solitary loon
Wept, beneath the summer moon.
Toads and teals and tiddlers, captured
By her voice, cheered on, enraptured:
“Bravo!” “Too divine!” “Encore!”
So the nightingale once more,
Quite unused to such applause,
Sang till dawn without a pause.

Next night when the Nightingale
Shook her head and twitched her tail,
Closed an eye and fluffed a wing
And had cleared her throat to sing
She was startled by a croak.
“Sorry – was that you who spoke?”
She enquired when the frog
Hopped towards her from the bog.
“Yes,” the frog replied. “You see,
I'm the frog who owns this tree
In this bog I've long been known
For my splendid baritone
And, of course, I wield my pen
For Bog Trumpet now and then”

“Did you… did you like my song?”
“Not too bad – but far too long.
The technique was fine of course,
But it lacked a certain force”.
“Oh!” the nightingale confessed.
Greatly flattered and impressed
That a critic of such note
Had discussed her art and throat:
“I don't think the song's divine.
But – oh, well – at least it's mine”.

“That's not much to boast about”.
Said the heartless frog. “Without
Proper training such as I
- And few others can supply.
You'll remain a mere beginner.
But with me you'll be a winner”
“Dearest frog”, the nightingale
Breathed: “This is a fairy tale –
And you are Mozart in disguise
Come to earth before my eyes”.

“Well I charge a modest fee.”
“Oh!” “But it won't hurt, you'll see”
Now the nightingale inspired,
Flushed with confidence, and fired
With both art and adoration,
Sang – and was a huge sensation.
Animals for miles around
Flocked towards the magic sound,
And the frog with great precision
Counted heads and charged admission.

Though next morning it was raining,
He began her vocal training.
“But I can't sing in this weather”
“Come my dear – we'll sing together.
Just put on your scarf and sash,
Koo-oh-ah! ko-ash! ko-ash!”
So the frog and nightingale
Journeyed up and down the scale
For six hours, till she was shivering
and her voice was hoarse and quivering.

Though subdued and sleep deprived,
In the night her throat revived,
And the sumac tree was bowed,
With a breathless, titled crowd:
Owl of Sandwich, Duck of Kent,
Mallard and Milady Trent,
Martin Cardinal Mephisto,
And the Coot of Monte Cristo,
Ladies with tiaras glittering
In the interval sat twittering –
And the frog observed them glitter
With a joy both sweet and bitter.

Every day the frog who'd sold her
Songs for silver tried to scold her:
“You must practice even longer
Till your voice, like mine grows stronger.
In the second song last night
You got nervous in mid-flight.
And, my dear, lay on more trills:
Audiences enjoy such frills.
You must make your public happier:
Give them something sharper snappier.
We must aim for better billings.
You still owe me sixty shillings.”

Day by day the nightingale
Grew more sorrowful and pale.
Night on night her tired song
Zipped and trilled and bounced along,
Till the birds and beasts grew tired
At a voice so uninspired
And the ticket office gross
Crashed, and she grew more morose -
For her ears were now addicted
To applause quite unrestricted,
And to sing into the night
All alone gave no delight.

Now the frog puffed up with rage.
“Brainless bird – you're on the stage –
Use your wits and follow fashion.
Puff your lungs out with your passion.”
Trembling, terrified to fail,
Blind with tears, the nightingale
Heard him out in silence, tried,
Puffed up, burst a vein, and died.

Said the frog: “I tried to teach her,
But she was a stupid creature –
Far too nervous, far too tense.
Far too prone to influence.
Well, poor bird – she should have known
That your song must be your own.
That's why I sing with panache:
“Koo-oh-ah! ko-ash! ko-ash!”
And the foghorn of the frog
Blared unrivalled through the bog.

*

