Poem #4

“Invictus” by William Ernest Henley

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.

At age 12 Henley was diagnosed with tubercular arthritis that necessitated the amputation of one of his legs just below the knee. As he healed in the infirmary, Henley began to write poems, including “Invictus.” The poem has received more positive publicity with the introduction of the Invictus Games, an international sporting event for wounded, injured, and sick service personnel.
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When he says "captain of my soul," he makes an image of his life as a ship, and he's the one sailing it.

“Fell” means to knock down, like felling a tree, but it can also mean of a cruel nature.

He says here that even though what awaits him after this life is death, he is still brave.

"Pit" here means hell or darkest night.

"Invictus" is Latin for "unconquered."

No matter how dark it gets, he is still in charge of himself.

To “bludgeon” is to beat. So he is saying that even though he’s been harshly treated by fate, he is still standing proud.

“Shade” here refers to the darkness of death.

“Strait” means narrow, tight, difficult.

This is a biblical allusion to the saying, “Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to eternal life.” (Matthew 7:14)

The scroll is a metaphor for the law.
Memorizing it

“Invictus”

Out of the n______ that c______ me,
B_____ as the P___ from pole to p____,
I t_____ whatever g____ may be
For my u_______ soul.

In the fell c_______ of c________
I have not w______ nor cried a______,
Under the b________ of chance
My head is b________, but u________.

B______ this place of w_____ and tears
Looms but the h_______ of the s____,
And yet the m_______ of the y____
Finds, and s____ find me, u_______.

It m______ not how s______ the gate,
How c_______ with p________ the scroll,
I am the m_______ of my f______:
I am the c_______ of my s______.
“Invictus”

O__ o__ t__ n______ t__ c_______ m_.
B_____ a_ t_ P___ f__ p_ t_ p_.
 I t____ w___ g___ m___ b_
 F___ m__ u________ s__.

I__ t__ f___ c_______ o__ c________
I h___ n___ w________ n___ c___ a____.
 U___ t__ b________ o__ c___
 M___ h___ i_ b________, b_ u________.

B_____ t__ p___ o_ w_____ a_ t__
L___ b__ t__ h________ o__ the s__,
A___ y___ t_ m_______ o_ t_. y____
 F__, a__ s__ f__ m_, u_______.

I__ m______ n_ h_ s______ t_ g__.
H_ c_______ w__ p_______ t_ s__,
 I a_ t_ m_______ o_ m_ f____:
 I a_ t_ c_______ o_ m_ s_____.

Memorizing it