

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

# Invictus

By William Ernest Henley  
1875

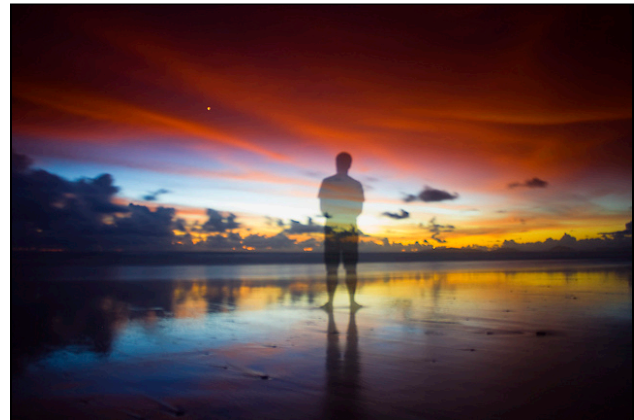
*William Ernest Henley (1849-1903) was an English poet, critic, and editor. The following poem, published in 1875, is his best known work, which he wrote just after the amputation of his foot due to tuberculosis. As you read, take notes on the poem's form and how it contributes to the tone of the speaker.*

[1] Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable<sup>1</sup> soul.

[5] In the fell<sup>2</sup> clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings<sup>3</sup> of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

[10] Beyond this place of wrath<sup>4</sup> and tears  
Looms<sup>5</sup> but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace<sup>6</sup> of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

[15] It matters not how strait<sup>7</sup> the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.



*"I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul" by Aristocrats-hat is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.*

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1. **Unconquerable** (*adjective*) unable to be defeated
2. fierce, cruel, or terrible
3. beatings
4. **Wrath** (*noun*) violent anger
5. **Loom** (*verb*) to appear in a large, strange, or frightening form
6. **Menace** (*noun*) a threat
7. narrow (archaic)