

# SPOKEN WORD

## *The Runaway Bunny*

### If/Then Spoken Word Poetry:

When writing *The Runaway Bunny*, Margaret Wise Brown was inspired by the “if you, then I” structure of the French ballad *Les Metamorphoses*. In this activity, participants will utilize that structure and other literary devices to create a collaborative spoken word poem.

### Materials Needed:

You'll need a few pieces of paper and something to write with.

### Directions:

#### Step 1: Imagining the Experience

- Give yourself about 1 minute to write down four things you would do if you could go anywhere, do anything, or be anyone. Be sure to leave space after each item for you to come back to that idea and add additional information.
- When you've made your list, go back and imagine yourself doing each activity. It may help to close your eyes and find somewhere comfortable to sit or lie down.
- Make notes about each experience for yourself. Try to be as detailed as possible and remember to consider all of your senses. What emotions do you experience? What do you see? What can you taste? What can you touch? What do you hear?

**“If you become a fisherman,’ said the little bunny, ‘I will become a rock on the mountain, high above you.’ ‘If you become a rock on the mountain high above me,’ said his mother, ‘I will be a mountain climber, and I will climb to where you are.’” – *The Runaway Bunny*  
Margaret Wise Brown**

#### Step 2: Writing Together

- Each person in the group should share their four items with the other collaborators. Work together to select one idea to be the start of your spoken word poem.
- The person whose item was chosen should write that idea at the top of a blank sheet of paper. Include details from the brainstorm to really draw the listener into the experience. This may mean that you need to add additional sentences or phrases after your initial one.
- When they're done, the first writer should pass the paper to another person. That person should add the next line of the piece by completing the phrase: “If you (previous person's activity), then I will (new person's idea)”.
- Try to make each new idea connect and build on what the writer before you contributed.
- After the second person has added their line, they should pass the paper to a new person who will also complete the phrase with their idea. Continue this pattern until every writer has been included at least once.
- Read your piece out loud and make any necessary revisions. Remembering that spoken word poetry is designed to be heard rather than read. Does the language in your piece create a clear and interesting experience for the listener? Are there any changes you can make to better express the tone and mood of your piece?

#### Step 3: Say It Out Loud

- Assign everyone in your group parts of the story to say out loud. Maybe there are places where multiple people say a line at the same time.
- Practice saying the piece together as a group. Remember that you can use your voice in lots of different ways! Your volume, speed, and how high or low you speak helps the listener to better understand and experience your words.

# SPOKEN WORD

---

*The Runaway  
Bunny*

---

## **Closing:**

Stand and perform your spoken word poem together. Identify and share any favorite moments from your piece.

## **Bonus:**

Keep developing your piece with one of the following activities:

- Add gestures or other movements to make your piece even more of a visual experience. Consider including group and solo movement as well as moments of stillness and frozen pictures.
- Turn your spoken word piece into a rap by making phrases rhyme and setting it to a beat.
- Gather objects from around your house that you can use to add additional sounds to your spoken word piece.