

Suggested Spoken Word

We Hold This Treasure

by Rachel Peters

Held in my hands.
Hands that burn with desire to see them come.
Let them come.

Etched upon my heart.
Stitched within my being.
That which I hold is still holding me.

Truth that from the beginning of time men have guarded with life
and breath . . .

Treasure held dear.
So trusted.
So near.

We have been entrusted.
I have been entrusted with the greatest gift the world has ever known.

She was a light that passed it down. That treasure, can't you see?

I remember her holding out her heart as she held out her hand.

Nestled across her palm, so frail, so soiled from the journey on which she'd
been, sat this treasure. One like I had not ever known.

Smaller than a grain of sand yet shining like the brightest sun, its warmth in
the form of her stories made its place into me a home.

What she had seen and where she had been gave me hope for my future.
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The way she spoke His Name, the peace that still held her heart
after being war-torn.

The softness in her face as she shared of His kindness,
how mercy had run itself like a thread throughout the fabric of her days.

Legacy. Her story passed down, now mine.

Handed to me with such gentle authority.

There I sat.

Passed down a treasure.

Her story now intertwined with mine.

Never had I felt so small yet so big at one time.

We hold this treasure in earthen vessels; this light; this gospel; this truth.

Still a mystery that within the frailty of man resides a power that speaks
galaxies by breath, moves mountains by rumble, subdues seas split wide
open and triumphs in battles unseen.

Yet this same power silences by whisper, runs after the brazen sinner, and
comforts those who are painfully in between.

Its light pierces through darkness, gives courage to faint-hearted
and stands even in fire, all alone.

Take heart.

For we have overcome the world.

Until the whole world knows we won't back down.

I will open my windows, never grow silent, shout from the rooftops when
rulers demand me to cease. I will stand for my God, cherish this treasure,
live unaccused while still bending my knee.

For God. He's my rescue.

Even kings will cry out.

Pronounced blessing will follow.

To all nations announced.

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Whether in fire or famine or trial or drought, my faith will keep beating.
My life will cry out.

Take courage, my dear one, face fear unashamed. Our stories are fastened
and woven between.

I now hold out my heart as I hold out my hand. Entrusted with treasure
now seen.

We whisper to others, "Guard, through His Spirit who dwells in you and me,
the treasure entrusted, this light's eternal gleam."

This treasure, this truth is not a prize to be hallowed alone.
To be stuffed in a closet or set in a room.
It's the living, breathing call come down from heaven for you and me.

It's the cure for all broken; He's the Light of worlds present and yet to be
seen.
Treasured is the hope that every wandering eye will someday glean.
In its boughs, history runs deep, in its horizons all creation will bow a knee.

I will hide its secrets in my heart. My lips won't stay silent. My life's work
will cry out.

Loud some days.
Silent others.
Still the message proclaimed.

You see, treasure is always guarded.
My heart will always keep its ways.
But hidden? I will not partner with keeping treasure to myself.

Held in my hands.
Hands that burn with desire to see them come.
Let them come . . .

Etched upon my heart.
Stitched within my being.
That which I hold is still holding me.

Tips for Presenting Spoken Word

1. VOICE INFLECTION.

Voice inflection and variation is especially key in Spoken Word. Excellent Spoken Word requires a unique rhythm and voice inflection not found in other forms of communication. Don't settle for a monologue. There must be an audible experience of the written work including sound devices, rhythm, and the way sound compliments the meaning of the written piece. Don't forget, well-timed silence can also be very effective.

2. CLEAR IMAGERY.

Work to express something fresh and relatable by interesting and unique figures of speech, sound devices (alliteration, rhyme, repetition) and linguistic effects achieved through various patterns and variations in diction.

3. WHAT MAKES POETRY STRONG AND AFFECTIVE?

Sensory details, vivid imagery, conflict, purpose, rhyme, assonance, and alliteration are all elements that make Spoken Word stronger.

4. BODY LANGUAGE/STAGING—PACING.

Don't feel like you have to have hand motions for every word. It's usually more powerful and less distracting to keep your arms to your side. Pacing and aimless body movements are a distraction to your message. A few deliberate body moves and hand motions are far more impacting and effective than aimless wandering and overuse of arms and hands. And don't step backward, it weakens your impact.

5. EYE CONTACT.

Control eye movements. When shifting, don't break character. Also, don't let your eyes reveal your nerves, and don't let it show in your eyes. Speak with purpose and confidence and let it shine in your eyes.

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6. MORE FACIALS.

Practice in front of the mirror. Use facial expression that is genuine, humble, and natural to help communicate your message. Don't overplay it like a drama monologue but don't just stand there with a flat face. Engage and connect with your audience with eye contact and facial expression. Take your cues from the words you speak—"pain," "love," "joy," and "fear" should affect the facial expressions used to communicate the emotion of each of those words.

7. MEMORIZE WITHOUT BEING FLAT.

Memorization is absolutely the best way to achieve a full and fulfilling performance experience as long as you can perform the poetry without sounding memorized or that you're just reciting lines.

8. WATCH THE GOOD ONES.

Attend or watch performances of Spoken Word or Poetry Slam on YouTube or other video channels. What are other performers doing? What kinds of choices are they making with their voices and gestures? What do you find compelling about their poetry, voice inflections, and imagery?

9. END STRONG.

Be sure to end with intention and purpose. Don't let your voice just wander off—end well.