

NOTES

Something To Cheer About is a narrative poem that may be performed by either a female or a male and should be entered in Poetry Interpretation. Choosing the narrator of the poem will be crucial in determining how to best perform this poem. Is the narrator a fellow cheerleader? Perhaps the narrator is simply a fellow classmate. Could the narrator be one of the football players on the team who is inspired by Christy's battle against cancer? Giving the narrator a definitive persona will allow the poem to be more easily accessible to the audience. There are a lot of emotions found within this poem. Play those emotions. The performer's facial expressions and rate of delivery should mirror the emotions found within the progression of the poem. When the narrator first speaks of Christy's diagnosis, the vocals, facial expressions and rate of delivery should indicate concern for her, and these beginning lines should be delivered with a slower, more methodical rate of delivery. After all, everyone is very worried for their friend; however, when the football team begins winning its games after receiving a recorded message from Christy, the mood and tone of the poem should change to one of inspiration and hope. That excitement for the teams' success should be easily noted by the audience through the smiles of the performer and the energy in the vocals during this section of the poem. The performer will also notice the use of repetition throughout the poem. Play each of the repetitive phrases differently. Placing the correct emphasis of different words will add overall vocal variety to the performance. This poem is a tour-de-force for the right performer. The drama mask icons simply serve as suggestions for when to turn the pages in the manuscript.

When school started this year
the teacher
assigned each student a desk.
Each row was meticulously
alphabetized—
though one desk was noticeably
empty.
The empty desk stood at the end of the last row.
The desk
belonged to Christy Walters.

Small towns
have difficulty keeping secrets—and kids in

small towns
are usually the first ones to know these secrets.

Christy Walters
was diagnosed with cancer.
Christy Walters
was starting chemotherapy.

It was something to talk about.



Not every school has a student
diagnosed with cancer.
Not every school has a student
fighting for her life.
Not every school has a student
missed by everyone in her class.

Christy Walters
is our school.
Christy Walters
is everyone's best friend.
Christy Walters
is and has been a cheerleader
for twelve of her seventeen years of life—
from a little girl in pigtails
standing on the sidelines of a Pee Wee football game
to the co-captain of this year's varsity squad.

From the picture of perfect health
standing on the sidelines of the brightest future in school
to the negative images shown on an x-ray machine.

It was something to think about.



Christy has cheered for the home team,
when everyone else—including the players—lost hope.
Christy has cheered for the hometown football team
that has not won a game in two-and-a-half seasons.