

NOTES

Everyone has a story to tell. In this poignant poem, Shannon Cartwright introduces us to a young student, whose life story is not unlike any youth's of today. This first-person narrative poem may be performed by either a female or male performer and may be entered in Poetry Interpretation; however, due to its free-verse style, a performer may choose to perform this selection as a monologue and enter it in Dramatic Interpretation. Don't overplay this selection. The key to the success of this poem lies in the ability of the performer to be 100% honest and allow the audience to see the character's thought process, as the protagonist carefully chooses which details and memories to divulge to the stranger at the bus stop. If used in Poetry Interpretation, the drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages of the manuscript.

I am sitting at this bus stop,
Looking at my watch.
It is obvious the bus is running late—again.
Sitting to my side
Is a gentleman I have never seen before.
The silence is deafening, and it soon becomes awkward.
It becomes clear one of us will eventually break the ice and speak,
Though I secretly know that person will not be me.

Finally, it is the man sitting to my side who breaks the eerie silence.
The man sharing the bench with me ends our awkward quietness,
And, in the process, uses an adage reserved only for those over forty.

The man leans forward and says,
“Penny for your thoughts.”



I am sitting at this bus stop,
Looking at my watch.
The bus is running late again, as usual,
And sitting to my side
Is a gentleman I have never met before.
I wonder to myself if he truly wants me to tell him my thoughts.
Turning his head to the side,

It becomes clear—he is sincerely interested.
With a slight nod of his head,
He silently gives me permission to begin.

Finally, the man smiles at me for the first time.
He assures me he is sincere,
And as I continue with my persistent silence,
The man fears I might not be amiable to his offer.

So he leans forward again and asks,
“Or do your thoughts cost more?”



I am sitting at this bus stop,
Looking at my watch.
The bus is running late again, as always.
Deciding I probably have time,
I choose to tell him a story.
Telling a story is always more fascinating than a simple thought,
So I decide to tell him the story of my life.

Finally, I decide to begin my story from when I was much younger.
I clear my head so that I may tell my story with accuracy and precision.
Finally, I look him in the eyes and begin.

He leans forward and says—
Well, he is anticipating what I have to say,
So he actually doesn't say anything to me this time.



I tell him how I grew up like many other American children.
—how I had two loving parents and two sisters.
—how I had grandparents I would visit often.
—how I had a safe and loving environment in which to grow.

I tell him how I never knew the rules could change in an instant.
—how my grandfather could suffer so many heart attacks and survive.
—how one day he wasn't so lucky and passed away.
—how a year later my grandmother would develop two brain tumors.
—how my grandmother would then join my grandfather in Heaven.