

Songs and Hymns

about *All Things Bright and Beautiful, Lift Every Voice and Sing, How Can I Keep from Singing?*

All Things Bright and Beautiful

This is one of a series of hymns that the author wrote for children on the Apostle's Creed. This hymn text expands on God as "Maker of heaven and earth." The author was inspired by Psalm 104:24-25, and was likely inspired as well by a verse from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: "He prayeth best, who loveth best; All things great and small; For the dear God who loveth us; He made and loveth all."

This song was a Sunday School standard for decades, and celebrates creation in all of the, well, bright and beautiful detail.

The person who requested this song said, "This song reminds me of being a child; and it reminds me of my mother."

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Initially a poem for a school assembly at which Booker T. Washington spoke on Lincoln's birthday in 1900, this text and tune have gained national recognition and devotion, not only within the African American community but also among all who seek justice, and liberation from oppression. Alicia Keys sang this before the National Anthem at this year's Super Bowl as an expression of the NFL's commitment to the work of racial justice and equality.

The person who requested this song said, "It speaks to overcoming terrible obstacles and facing the future with determination, hope, and love. It acknowledges that the past and the present are difficult, and that the fight is not over. It even speaks to love of the country where people reside, even though it acknowledges the hardships that people have suffered at the hands of others of that same land."

How Can I Keep from Singing?

This is an old Baptist song; the original text was titled "Always Rejoicing." Although it is attributed to Baptist pastor Robert Lowry who published it as a church song, the text appeared in an 1868 *New Yorker* and was attributed to "Pauline T." It is uncertain whether she is the author, or the person who simply contributed it to the publication.

This is another song that celebrates creation, and expresses confidence in the power of Christ and the peace of Christ that come amidst life's struggles, and help us overcome them. Through singing!