

Name _____ Hour _____

“If I Should Have a Daughter” by Sarah Kay



Go to website and watch and listen to the author’s poem and TED talk about Spoken Poetry.

https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter/transcript

00:12 If I should have a daughter, instead of "Mom," she's going to call me "Point B," because that way she knows that no matter what happens, at least she can always find her way to me.

00:26 And I'm going to paint solar systems on the backs of her hands so she has to learn the entire universe before she can say, "Oh, I know that like the back of my hand."

00:35 And she's going to learn that this life will hit you hard in the face, wait for you to get back up just so it can kick you in the stomach. But getting the wind knocked out of you is the only way to remind your lungs how much they like the taste of air. There is hurt, here, that cannot be fixed by Band-Aids or poetry.

00:53 So the first time she realizes that Wonder Woman isn't coming, I'll make sure she knows she doesn't have to wear the cape all by herself, because no matter how wide you stretch your fingers, your hands will always be too small to catch all the pain you want to heal. Believe me, I've tried. "And, baby," I'll tell her, don't keep your nose up in the air like that. I know that trick; I've done it a million times. You're just smelling for smoke, so you can follow the trail back to a burning house, so you can find the boy who lost everything in the fire to see if you can save him. Or else find the boy who lit the fire in the first place, to see if you can change him. But I know she will anyway, so instead I'll always keep an extra supply of chocolate and rain boots nearby, because there is no heartbreak that chocolate can't fix. Okay, there's a few that chocolate can't fix.

01:42 But that's what the rain boots are for, because rain will wash away everything, if you let it. I want her to look at the world through the underside of a glass-bottom boat, to look through a microscope at the galaxies that exist on the pinpoint of a human mind, because that's the way my mom taught me. That there'll be days like this.

02:01 (Singing) There'll be days like this, my momma said. When you open your hands to catch and wind up with only blisters and bruises; when you step out of the phone booth and try to fly and the very people you want to save are the ones standing on your cape; when your boots will fill with rain, and you'll be up to your knees in disappointment. And those are the very days you have all the more reason to say thank you.

02:23 Because there's nothing more beautiful than the way the ocean refuses to stop kissing the shoreline, no matter how many times it's sent away. You will put the wind in win some, lose some. You will put the star in starting over, and over. And no matter how many land mines erupt in a minute, be sure your mind lands on the beauty of this funny place called life. And yes, on a scale from one to over-trusting, I am pretty

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damn naive. But I want her to know that this world is made out of sugar. It can crumble so easily, but don't be afraid to stick your tongue out and taste it.

02:57 "Baby," I'll tell her, "remember, your momma is a worrier, and your poppa is a warrior, and you are the girl with small hands and big eyes who never stops asking for more." Remember that good things come in threes and so do bad things. Always apologize when you've done something wrong, but don't you ever apologize for the way your eyes refuse to stop shining. Your voice is small, but don't ever stop singing. And when they finally hand you heartache, when they slip war and hatred under your door and offer you handouts on street-corners of cynicism and defeat, you tell them that they really ought to meet—your mother.

Sarah Kay says that "*Spoken-word poetry is the art of performance poetry. I tell people it involves creating poetry that doesn't just want to sit on paper, that something about it demands it be heard out loud or witnessed in person.*"

How did this poem have the effect of "jumping off the paper"?

When Sarah Kay said that her first spoken-word poem was "*packed with all the wisdom of a 14-year-old.*" How is that statement ironic?

What is she really trying to say?

She tells us, spoken-word poetry doesn't have to be "indignant," it could be it could be fun or painful or serious or silly. (But it can also still be indignant, as her first poems were.)

So, what does *indignant* mean?

When was a time you were indignant?

She showed up to each new poem with a backpack full of everywhere else that she had been.

What is in your backpack? _____
