Pillar Poems

The **Pillar Poems** of Theta Rho Nu Fraternity represent the heart and soul of the organization, encapsulating its unwavering commitment to its members and the broader community. These poems serve as enduring symbols of the Fraternity's guiding principles, embodying themes of unity, resilience, empowerment, and purpose. Each poem reflects the spirit of Theta Rho Nu: a brotherhood forged in strength, dedicated to professional excellence, personal growth, and meaningful advocacy for same-gender-loving men of color.

The Pillar Poems articulate the Fraternity's hope for the future, envisioning a world where all members thrive in their unique identities, contribute to collective progress, and inspire others through their achievements. Through evocative language and profound messages, the poems underscore Theta Rho Nu's mission to cultivate environments that uplift, support, and champion the aspirations of its members while leaving a transformative impact on the communities they serve. These works stand as cultural and spiritual touchstones, reminding each member of their responsibility to honor their past, celebrate their present, and strive for a future that reflects the Fraternity's highest ideals.

Invictus By William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

It Couldn't Be Done By Edgar Albert Guest

Somebody said that it couldn’t be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn’t," but he would be one
Who wouldn’t say so till he’d tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you’ll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he’d begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you’ll do it.

If— By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

When My Brother Fell by Essex Hemphill

When my brother fell
I picked up his weapons
and never once questioned
whether I could carry
the weight and grief,
the responsibility he shouldered.
I never questioned
whether I could aim
or be as precise as he.
He had fallen,
and the passing ceremonies
marking his death
did not stop the war.

Standing at the front lines
flanked by able brothers
who miss his eloquent courage,
his insistent voice
urging us to rebel,
urging us to not fear embracing
for more than sex,
for more than kisses
and notches in our belts.

Our loss is greater
than all the space
we fill with prayers
and praise.
He burned out
his pure life force
to bring us a chance
to love ourselves
with commitment.
He knew the simple
spilling of seed
would not be enough
to bind us.