

APPENDICES

BIOGRAPHY OF MAYA ANGELOU

Maya Angelou was born on April 4, 1928 as Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis and was raised in segregated rural Arkansas. At the age of sixteen, Angelou gave birth to her son, Guy Johnson. At age 22, she married Tosh Angelou, though the marriage lasted but a couple of years. In order to support Guy and herself, she had to get jobs as a waitress, a cook, and a night club singer.

Angelou became interested in writing, so she moved to New York and joined Harlem Writers Guild. In 1960, Angelou and Guy moved to Egypt, where Angelou was an editor for Arab Observer. Two years later, they moved to Ghana, where she worked for three years as a writer, and administrator for the University of Ghana, and as an editor for the African Review. Angelou has earned The Ladies Home Journal Woman of the Year Award, Matrix Award, The Golden Eagle Award and the International Woman of the year.

In addition, she has published many distinguished poems which have received recognition by many people, including President Clinton. Her poem *On the Pulse of Morning* was chosen by President Clinton to be read at the 1993 presidential inauguration. Many of her volumes of poetry have been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, including *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?, And Still I Rise, and Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Die.*

Maya Angelou's Poems

Caged Bird

The free bird leaps
on the back of the win
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird
sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
an the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Still I Rise

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Million Man March Poem

The night has been long,
The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark,
And the walls have been steep.

Under a dead blue sky on a distant beach,
I was dragged by my braids just beyond your reach.
Your hands were tied, your mouth was bound,
You couldn't even call out my name.
You were helpless and so was I,
But unfortunately throughout history
You've worn a badge of shame.

I say, the night has been long,
The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark
And the walls have been steep.

But today, voices of old spirit sound
Speak to us in words profound,
Across the years, across the centuries,
Across the oceans, and across the seas.
They say, draw near to one another,
Save your race.
You have been paid for in a distant place,
The old ones remind us that slavery's chains
Have paid for our freedom again and again.

The night has been long,
The pit has been deep,
The night has been dark,
And the walls have been steep.

The hells we have lived through and live through still,
Have sharpened our senses and toughened our will.
The night has been long.
This morning I look through your anguish
Right down to your soul.
I know that with each other we can make ourselves whole.
I look through the posture and past your disguise,
And see your love for family in your big brown eyes.

I say, clap hands and let's come together in this meeting ground,
I say, clap hands and let's deal with each other with love,
I say, clap hands and let us get from the low road of indifference,
Clap hands, let us come together and reveal our hearts,

Let us come together and revise our spirits,
Let us come together and cleanse our souls,
Clap hands, let's leave the preening
And stop imposterism our own history.
Clap hands, call the spirits back from the ledge,
Clap hands, let us invite joy into our conversation,
Courtesy into our bedrooms,
Gentleness into our kitchen,
Care into our nursery.

The ancestors remind us, despite the history of pain
We are a going-on people who will rise again.

And still we rise.

Life Doesn't Frighten Me

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall
Life doesn't frighten me at all
Bad dogs barking loud
Big ghosts in a cloud
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Mean old Mother Goose
Lions on the loose
They don't frighten me at all
Dragons breathing flame
On my counterpane
That doesn't frighten me at all.

I go boo
Make them shoo
I make fun
Way they run
I won't cry
So they fly
I just smile
They go wild
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Tough guys in a fight
All alone at night
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Panthers in the park
Strangers in the dark
No, they don't frighten me at all.

That new classroom where
Boys all pull my hair
(Kissy little girls with their hair in curls)
They don't frighten me at all.

Don't show me frogs and snakes
And listen for my scream,
If I'm afraid at all
It's only in my dreams.

I've got a magic charm
That I keep up my sleeve,
I can walk the ocean floor
And never have to breathe.

Life doesn't frighten me at all
Not at all
Not at all
Life doesn't frighten me at all.