

Still / Rise

Maya Angelou

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You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread 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.

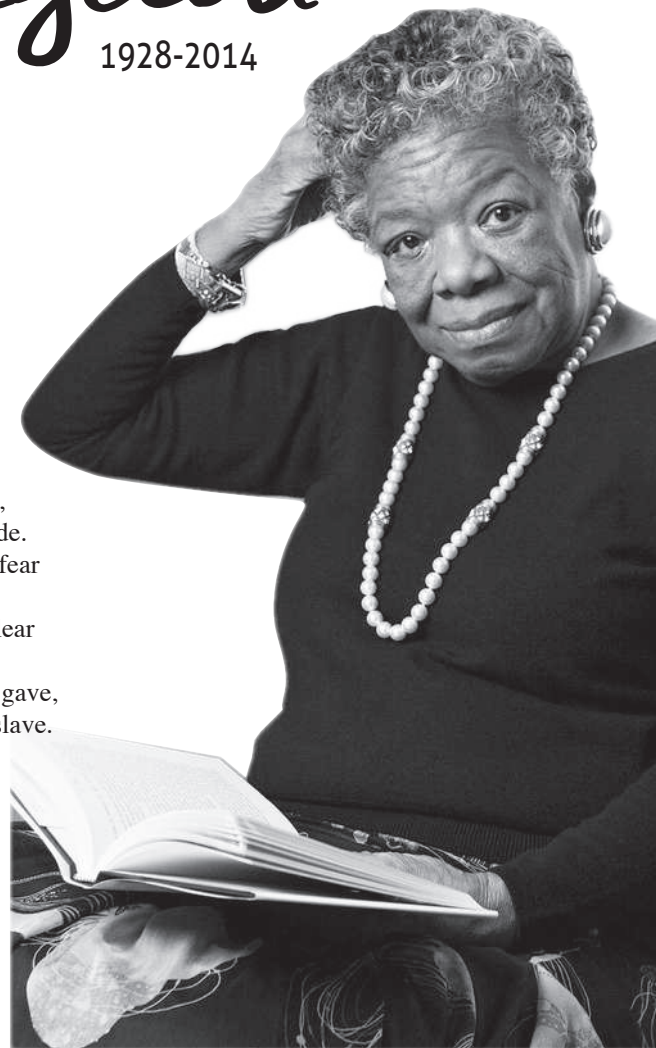
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

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.

—Maya Angelou, QEPD



immigrant victims of certain crimes to help in the investigation and prosecution of those crimes.

Immigrants who are victims of qualifying crimes that occurred in the United States, who have suffered substantial harm as a result of that crime and who are cooperative in the investigation or prosecution of that crime may submit an application for "U Nonimmigrant Status" or the "U Visa." Qualifying crimes include (but are not limited to) domestic violence, stalking, assault, sexual assault and gang-related violence. A full list of qualifying crimes is available on www.uscis.gov. "U Nonimmigrant status" allows victims to live and work in the U.S. for four years without fear of deportation and puts immigrants on the path to becoming Permanent Residents of the U.S.

Thanks to VAWA, Noelia now has immigration status and employment authorization. She has received counseling and feels stronger than she has ever felt before. She has a job that allows her to support herself and her children and she plans to go back to school someday. It is a far cry from the life she lived three years ago. Then, like many other immigrant victims, Noelia felt vulnerable and helpless to change her circumstances. But now, the twin fears of violence and deportation no longer rule her life.

Noelia no longer has nightmares about being separated from her children, and knows that if she ever needs them, the police are just a phone call away. Noelia's biggest regret is that she

maintained her silence and believed her abuser's lies for so long. She wishes she had spoken out earlier about the abuse in her home, and accessed the services and programs that enabled her to leave her vicious husband behind and forge a better life for her children. Noelia says that she is free now, and that she and her family are blossoming.

If you know someone like Noelia please pass along the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH) number to them. If the immigrant victim of domestic violence is the child of a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident or the parent of a U.S. citizen, please pass along the number, too.

The NDVH is a toll-free number. NDVH has experts in domestic violence who are always available to speak to someone in many different languages. They provide resources, counseling, and safety planning. The number for NDVH is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). ♦

Note: The Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP), a nonprofit foundation, promotes civil rights and economic and racial justice for poor and low-income people throughout Texas, with offices in Austin, Alamo, El Paso, Houston, Dallas and Odessa. If you are an undocumented victim of domestic violence seeking legal assistance, contact the VAWA Program at the Texas Civil Rights Project, 1-888-364-8277.