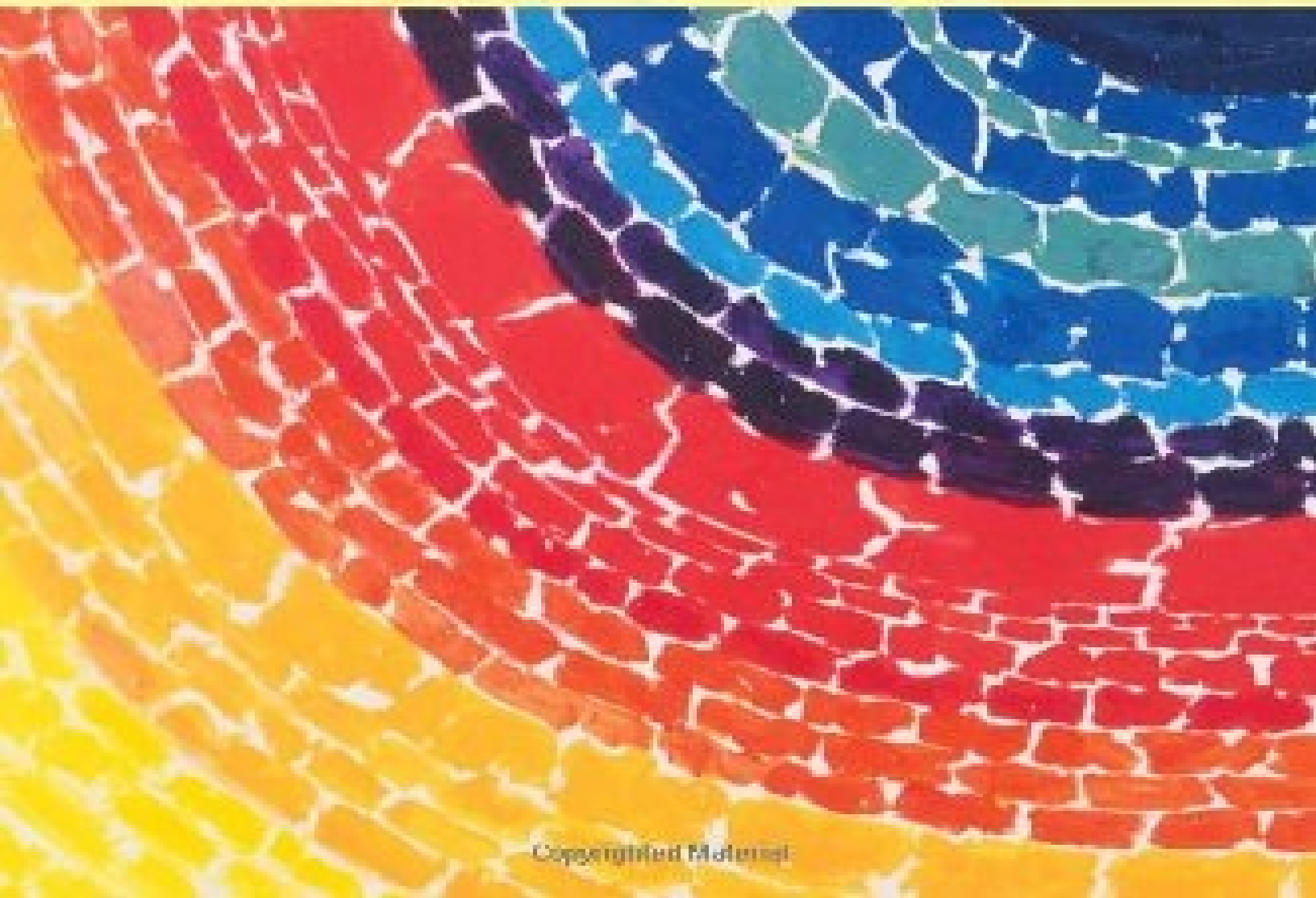




Maya Angelou

LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER



Letter to My Daughter

Maya Angelou

Random House (2008)

Rating: ★★★★★☆

Tags: Homes and haunts, Women, Social Science, Ethnic Studies, 20th century, African American Studies, Authors; American - Homes and haunts - New York (State) - New York, General, Literary, Authors; American - 20th century, Authors; American, New York, African American authors, Biography Autobiography, New York (State), Cultural Heritage, Biography, Angelou; Maya

From Publishers Weekly

From the mellifluous voice of a venerable American icon comes her first original collection of writing to be published in ten years, anecdotal vignettes drawn from a compelling life and written in Angelou's erudite prose. Beginning with her childhood, Angelou acknowledges her own inauguration into daughterhood in "Philanthropy," recalling the first time her mother called her "my daughter." Angelou becomes a mother herself at an early age, after a meaningless first sexual experience: "Nine months later I had a beautiful baby boy. The birth of my son caused me to develop enough courage to invent my life." Fearlessly sharing amusing, if somewhat embarrassing, moments in "Senegal," the mature Angelou is cosmopolitan but still capable of making a mistake: invited to a dinner party while visiting the African nation, Angelou becomes irritated that none of the guests will step on a lovely carpet laid out in the center of the room, so she takes it upon herself to cross the carpet, only to discover the carpet is a

table cloth that had been laid out in honor of her visit. The wisdom in this slight volume feels light and familiar, but it's also earnest and offered with warmth. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Review

“It’s a book to give to one’s daughter, mother, son or father, but definitely one to be read and savored.”—_Baltimore Sun

“Sound advice, vivid memory and strong opinion . . . What is clear is that [Maya] Angelou is, all these years later, still a charmer, still speaking her mind.”—Washington Post Book World

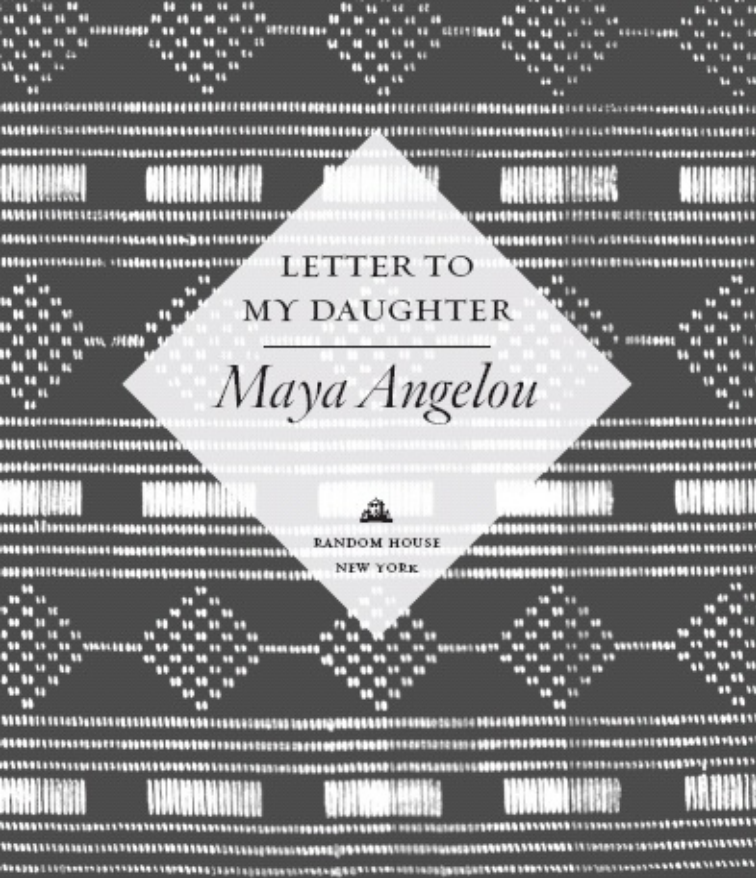
“A slim volume packed with nourishing nuggets of wisdom . . . Overarching each brief chapter is the vital energy of a woman taking life’s measure with every step.”—Kirkus Reviews

—
“Written in Angelou’s beautiful, poetic style, the essays feel like warm advice from a beloved aunt or grandmother, whose wisdom you know was earned.”—
Fredericksburg Free Lance—Star

“Spellbinding . . . Angelou delivers with her signature passion and fire. . . . Each [essay] delivers a powerful message.”—_Rocky Mountain News

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From the Trade Paperback edition.



LETTER TO
MY DAUGHTER

Maya Angelou


RANDOM HOUSE
NEW YORK

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*My thanks to some women who mothered me
through dark and bright days,*

*Annie Henderson
Vivian Baxter
Frances Williams
Berdis Baldwin
Amisher Glenn*

*My thanks to one woman who allows me
to be a daughter to her, even today,*

Dr. Dorothy Height

*My thanks to women not born to me but who allow me
to mother them,*

*Oprah Winfrey
Rosa Johnson Butler
Lydia Stuckey
Valerie Simpson
Constancia Romilly*

LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,

This letter has taken an extraordinary time getting itself together. I have all along known that I wanted to tell you directly of some lessons I have learned and under what conditions I have learned them.

My life has been long, and believing that life loves the liver of it, I have dared to try many things, sometimes trembling, but daring, still. I have only included here events and lessons which I have found useful. I have not told how I have used the solutions, knowing that you are intelligent and creative and resourceful and you will use them as you see fit.

You will find in this book accounts of growing up, unexpected emergencies, a few poems, some light stories to make you laugh and some to make you meditate.

There have been people in my life who meant me well, taught me valuable lessons, and others who have meant me ill and, have given me ample notification that my world is not meant to be all peaches and cream.

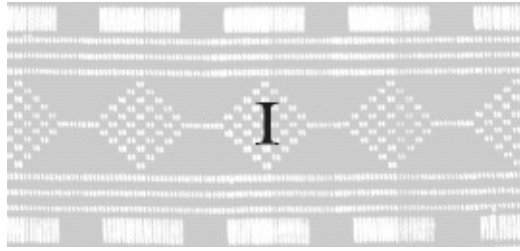
I have made many mistakes and no doubt will make more before I die. When I have seen pain, when I have found that my ineptness has caused displeasure, I have learned to accept my responsibility and to forgive myself first, then to apologize to anyone injured by my misreckoning. Since I cannot un-live history, and repentance is all I can offer God, I have hopes that my sincere apologies were accepted.

You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them. Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud. Do not complain. Make every effort to change things you do not like. If you cannot make a change, change the way you have been thinking. You might find a new solution.

Never whine. Whining lets a brute know that a victim is in the neighborhood.

Be certain that you do not die without having done something wonderful for humanity.

I gave birth to one child, a son, but I have thousands of daughters. You are Black and White, Jewish and Muslim, Asian, Spanish-speaking, Native American and Aleut. You are fat and thin and pretty and plain, gay and straight, educated and unlettered, and I am speaking to you all. Here is my offering to you.



Home

I was born in St. Louis, Missouri, but from the age of three I grew up in Stamps, Arkansas, with my paternal grandmother, Annie Henderson, and my father's brother, Uncle Willie, and my only sibling, my brother Bailey.

At thirteen I joined my mother in San Francisco. Later I studied in New York City. Throughout the years I have lived in Paris, Cairo, West Africa, and all over the United States.

Those are facts, but facts, to a child, are merely words to memorize, "My name is Johnny Thomas. My address is 220 Center Street." All facts, which have little to do with the child's truth.

My real growing up world, in Stamps, was a continual struggle against a condition of surrender. Surrender first to the grown-up human beings who I saw every day, all black and all very, very large. Then submission to the idea that black people were inferior to white people, who I saw rarely.

Without knowing why exactly, I did not believe that I was inferior to anyone except maybe my brother. I knew I was smart, but I also knew that Bailey was smarter, maybe because he reminded me often and even suggested that maybe he was the smartest person in the world. He came to that decision when he was nine years old.

The South, in general, and Stamps, Arkansas, in particular had had hundreds of years' experience in demoting even large adult blacks to psychological dwarfs. Poor white children had the license to address lauded and older blacks

POETRY

Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie
Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well
And Still I Rise
Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?
I Shall Not Be Moved
On the Pulse of Morning
Phenomenal Woman
The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou
A Brave and Startling Truth
Amazing Peace
Mother
Celebrations

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me
Kofi and His Magic

PICTURE BOOKS

*Now Sheba Sings the Song
Life Doesn't Frighten Me*

COOKBOOK

Hallelujah! The Welcome Table

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Angelou, Maya.

Letter to my daughter / Maya Angelou.

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1. Angelou, Maya. 2. Authors, American—Homes and haunts—New York (State)—New York. 3. African American authors—Biography. 4. Authors, American—20th century—Biography. I. Title.

PS3551.N464:Z468 2008

818'.5409—dc22

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www.atrandom.com

eISBN: 978-1-58836-751-8

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