

Inspirations

O P R A H

By Torise Battle

Throughout my life, there have been many women who have inspired me. However, none have inspired me as much as Oprah Winfrey. Oprah has shown me that people can rise above bad situations and turn their lives around for the positive. During the younger stages of her life, Oprah was forced to deal with such trials as divorced parents, sexual abuse, verbal insults and weight problems. Even though she became a three-time pageant queen, an accomplished scholar, and a competent news anchor, Oprah carried the pains of her childhood with her.

Despite her tragedies, Oprah persevered to become host of the nationally-syndicated "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and the first woman to own her own production company, Harpo Productions, Inc. She starred as Sofia in "The Color Purple." She produced and starred in "There are No Children Here," "The Women of Brewster Place" and *Beloved*.

Aside from her many professional goals, Oprah has accomplished many personal goals. For her fortieth birthday, Oprah accomplished a personal goal by running in the Marine Corps Marathon after an excessive battle with weight loss and emotional reconstruction. She has continued to excel in life by creating a national book club in conjunction with her talk show and by teaching at Northwestern University's J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

Oprah Winfrey embodies the ability, the courage and the faith to turn bad situations into good ones. Her enduring strength to overcome any obstacle put in her way should inspire us all to dream more, work harder and achieve higher.

Since my first encounter with Nikki Giovanni, she has been my poetic savior and lyrical inspiration. Obviously, being my favorite poet is not her only claim to fame. She has authored twelve books of poetry, essay collections including "Racism 101" (a must read for every black college student). In addition, she has been named Woman of the Year by three magazines including *Essence*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Ladies Home Journal*. She also holds thirteen honorary doctorate degrees, and is a professor at Virginia Polytechnic University.

Aside from all of her accolades, Giovanni has dedicated her life and literary talent to the empowerment of black people. A quote from her that I like to carry with me is "It is the job of the writer to make revolution irresistible". If there is one thing I hope to do with my writing it is moving others to light their life. I would like to think that the *Black Ink* is giving me my start.

I often like to go to the bookstore and wander aimlessly through the aisles to see what literary magician will cast her spell on me. On one particular occasion, I was looking through the African-American poetry section when I saw this thin book with a purple cover. I picked it up and saw a black woman with a short Afro and a stern smile. Her name was Nikki Giovanni. I opened the book and read the first poem inside, "Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day." I was in utter disbelief of how this woman had taken my exact feelings and thoughts and made a poem out of them. I turned the page again. Introspection. This was certainly divine intervention. Her words were like a mother holding her daughter's hand saying, "I've been where you are, and I made it through".

N I K K I

By Courtney McSwain