



And Still We Rise: The Trials and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-city High School Students

Miles Corwin

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Miles Corwin spent the 1996-97 school year with a class of high school seniors enrolled in a gifted program in South-Central L.A., one of America's most impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods. *And Still We Rise* is the stirring chronicle of these determined young people as they face the greatest challenge of their academic lives.

Toya's stepfather strangled her mother to death when Toya was in fifth grade. Olivia, a ward of the county, had lived in ten different foster and group homes by the time she was sixteen. Sadi, who grew up as a gangbanger, has seen three of his homies die and numerous others go to jail. Stories such as these are part of everyday life for the gifted students of Crenshaw High School.

Toya, Olivia and Sadi are just three of the twelve remarkable young people depicted in *And Still We Rise*. Miles Corwin, author of *The Killing Season* and journalist for the *Los Angeles Times*, spent a year in the classroom with these kids, ghetto scholars who qualified for an elite gifted program because of their exceptional IQs and standardized test scores. Corwin recorded their journey as they fought their own private wars on the chance that they might one day attend college.

Corwin sat alongside them as they studied William Shakespeare and James Joyce in classrooms where bullets were known to rip through windows. But for these students, the physical landscape was not their only battleground: Caught in the political crossfire, they face an uncertain future as the last high school senior class to benefit from affirmative action. What's more, the teacher they depend on most alternates between inspired lecturing and bitter ranting about an administration she perceives as the enemy.

Before the end of the year, one of these students will be arrested. Another will drop out of school because she's pregnant. Still, they won't give up. Many of these bright and persistent students will graduate, and, against all odds, win scholarships to college.

And Still We Rise is an unforgettable story of how twelve students manage to transcend obstacles that would dash the hopes of any but the most exceptional spirits.

Author and journalist Miles Corwin spent the entire 1996-97 school year with a remarkable group of individuals: the students in the senior Advanced Placement English class at Crenshaw High School -- young ghetto scholars who have managed to excel despite living in the hostile world of South Central Los Angeles. This book is a moving account of their courage, achievements, strength, and resilient spirit -- their personal crises, setbacks, catastrophes, and triumphs. It is an unforgettable ten-month visit to the dynamic, electrically charged classroom of Toni Little, an inspiring but volatile and wildly unpredictable white educator determined to imbue her minority students with a passion for great literature. Corwin also spent the year with Anita "Mama" Moultrie, a flamboyant black teacher whose Afrocentric teaching style was diametrically opposed to Little's traditional approach. These exceptional students -- all classified as gifted -- provide a ground zero perspective on the affirmative action debate and will remain with the readers always. Author and journalist Miles Corwin spent the entire 1996-97 school year with a remarkable group of individuals: the students in the senior Advanced Placement English class at Crenshaw High School ---young

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