

M. angelou's poem  
still i rise: thoughts of  
a black woman  
regarding the society  
S...



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The poem I selected was Still I Rise written by Maya Angelou in the 1970's. Angelou shares her thoughts and responses on how she feels as a Black woman is seen by society. She encompasses the feelings of not being able to be anything but Black. Society constricts her to those two labels, stripping all humanity from her. She asks her audience questions like "Does my haughtiness offend you?" and "Do you want to see me broken?" pointing out the contradiction in her oppressor's beliefs. She states in the poem that she is extremely resilient, not allowing any negativity, especially microaggressions affect her.

I believe this poem qualifies as a piece of "literature of resistance" because it resists the urge to conform to society's stereotypes and assumptions about the Black woman, where she cannot be delicate but she cannot be wild. It resists the abilities of others to label her and restrict her worth, causing "Black" and "woman" to be just two meaningless words. I know it is resisting it because not only am I living that experience myself and watching others live it more extensively, I see in her language with powerful phrases like: "

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." -Maya Angelou

"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."

And also:

" 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?"

Angelou cleverly uses those phrases to refer to the robbing of the goods and treasures of her homeland into things she and others have repossessed in different forms throughout the years, like happiness and hope. Angelou is truly inspirational with her successful attempt at resisting the social " norms" and " expectations" of Black women throughout society. She encourages others with her words leaving them with the message that still, they rise.