



Of Thee I Sing: A Letter To My Daughters

Barack Obama , Loren Long (Illustrator)

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In this tender, beautiful letter to his daughters, President Barack Obama has written a moving tribute to thirteen groundbreaking Americans and the ideals that have shaped our nation. From the artistry of Georgia O'Keeffe, to the courage of Jackie Robinson, to the patriotism of George Washington, President Obama sees the traits of these heroes within his own children, and within all of America's children.

Breathtaking, evocative illustrations by award-winning artist Loren Long at once capture the personalities and achievements of these great Americans and the innocence and promise of childhood.

This beautiful book celebrates the characteristics that unite all Americans, from our nation's founders to generations to come. It is about the potential within each of us to pursue our dreams and forge our own paths. It is a treasure to cherish with your family forever.

From the Hardcover edition.

Of Thee I Sing: A Letter To My Daughters Details

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KIKA says

This book is something special. I saw it on the rack at B&N and sat down to take a quick look. But as soon as I began reading, I knew it wasn't going to be just a quick look through.

President Obama writes the book as if it were a letter to his daughters. The story or letter, as it were is lovingly written and the illustrations beautiful.

Obama begins each page with

"Have I told you . . ."

Telling his girls how wonderful, strong, and kind they are. Subsequently highlighting a historic figure from American history that emulates these characteristics. From Jackie Robinson to Abe Lincoln, I smiled and shook my head with pride as I read about each and every figure. My favorite part is at the end, after 13 strong historic figures are highlighted, he writes.. .

"And have I told you that they are part of you.

and You one of them."

Beautiful I tell you just beautiful. It gave me such delight to read this book to my little sisters.---and to be honest to read it all on my own, many times. It warmed me to the core. A well written book indeed.

Lisa Vegan says

Full disclosure: I admire Barack Obama and am particularly smitten with him as a father, with his family. I think that he has a lovely family and that he and Michelle are marvelous parents, and the girls seem like truly nice people.

The concept of this book is that Obama is writing a letter to his daughters about how he feels love for them and his hopes for them, all the time educating them about people who have made a difference.

It might be thanks to the illustrator, Loren Long, that this book is ingenious in its execution.

For every attribute Obama mentions (creative, smart, brave, a healer, have your own song, being strong, honoring others' sacrifices, being kind, not giving up, an explorer, are inspiring, are part of a family, are proud to be an American) he tells a little about various people in history who exemplify those things. The people he introduces are Georgia O'Keeffe, Albert Einstein, Jackie Robinson, Sitting Bull, Billie Holiday, Helen Keller, Maya Lin, Jane Addams, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Neil Armstrong, Cesar Chavez, Abraham Lincoln, and George Washington. (At the back of the book, there is a short biographical paragraph on each of them.)

But what's brilliant about this, aside from introducing some inspiring people, is that the illustrations show Obama's two girls and then each of the famous people as children. As each person's contributions are

discussed, they appear with Obama's daughters on the next page. So, the two girls are joined by more and more people, until there are many children going forward together, as each one joins the group. I found it inspiring, especially since the focus is on the diversity of people that make the country great. It's children who are shown here, even if the accomplishments being talked about weren't brought to fruition until their adulthoods.

Some pictures of Bo, their dog, make it into the book, and I can never resist a cute dog.

I am far from a raving patriot, and I often don't like "patriotic" books, but I am fond of this book. I appreciate that the people featured made contributions in all sorts of different ways, and I admire most of them, so that probably influenced how I feel about this book. For some readers this book will be an unappealing celebrity book or too didactic or political, but I enjoyed it.

The illustrations are great, showing the featured people as kids and having them come from all sort of backgrounds making all sorts of contributions will help make history come alive even for kids not normally interested in the subject. There is something here to interest almost everyone.

Calista says

This was so good it almost made me cry. Barack is talking to his children telling them how much potential they have and relating it to influential people in history like MLK and Einstein and Lincoln and Washington. I love the art work in this book and it is so inspiring. It has lifted me up.

The kids liked it too only not as much as me. They gave it for stars. It is readable and engaging. It has soul in it.

I have to say how much I miss this man. I miss the world feeling like it had potential. I miss the safety and security I felt and the fact that every day was not full of chaos and manipulation. I miss the feeling that country was a light to the world and I am sad it feels like this is the end of our country. I don't know what will happen, but he might be our last great president. Hopefully some day, they will give him a monument in DC. He inspired millions.

I enjoyed this book. It was like a security blanket. It was warm and filled with light.

Joyce says

Sometimes less is more. And that's the case here. This simple little book has a powerful message for children and for us all. Very inspirational. It only takes a few minutes to read. The illustrations are beautiful.

Kathy Worrell ? says

What a great inspirational book for children!

Yes, you can be anything you set your mind to!

Loved the illustrations!

Ashley Wampler says

I loved this book! It is a letter written by Barack Obama to his little girls. On each page, he begins "Do you know you are _____?" He fills in the blank with a characteristic, such as brave, strong, etc. He then talks about a famous American that also embodies this trait. It is educational, but also very sweet and heartwarming. It definitely could be used to boost children's self esteem and self confidence. This book also pertains to various social studies topics due to the use of the famous Americans, and I love that it is written by our current president!

Rana DiOrio says

The Story: This is exactly my kind of book. It provokes meaningful discussions between parents and children, teachers and students. Who was Jackie Robinson? Why was he important to history? Who is Maya Lin? What was the significance of the Civil War? the Vietnam War? The pivotal conversations that this book evokes are innumerable.

The Artwork: I had the privilege of listening to Loren Long [insert link to his site: <http://www.lorenlong.com/>] present at the scbwi 2010 Summer Conference. I was awed by his creative genius, and this book takes my admiration of his talent to a whole new level. He depicts many layers of nuance and conveys so much meaning through the extraordinary illustrations in this book. I was especially moved by his portrayal of Sitting Bull.

The Passion: The love, respect, and admiration the author feels for his daughter is so palpable in this book that I cried as I read it to my own daughters. It is also clear how the author defines strong character and what he values most about our country by not only the heros he chooses to admire but also through his evocative word choices.

The Message: The underlying message is that all of these groundbreakers were once children, just like the readers, and they hatched the ideals that shaped our great nation. The take away message to children is that they can make a difference. Dream, and then make it so.

My Only Issues: My only suggestions for improvement are: (1) I wish the book was more environmentally-friendly, that is, printed on recycled paper and without a dust jacket; and (2) I wish that the author had reframed the question about being smart. Had he read Dr. Carol Dweck's Mindset: The Psychology of Success [<http://bit.ly/b78OaN>], I'm sure he would have praised the amount of effort his children exude vs. how "smart" they are.

The Conclusion: Buy [<http://amzn.com/037583527X>] or borrow this book and read it to the little pickles in your life. I will be giving it as a gift for a long time to come, and I imagine that you may do the same.

Stephanie Anze says

Of Thee I Sing is a moving letter Barack Obama writes to his daughters. Though intended for children, the message is universal. The illustrations are gorgeous and the theme relevant. For every trait that the former president attributes to his daughters, there is a notable person that best represents that trait. The simple format of the book highlights the powerful message: our individual traits are stronger working together rather than apart. A memorable book. Fun fact, Obama is the first sitting president to publish a children's book and the third president to publish one at all.

Matthew says

To check out my reviews: <https://dancinginth3dark.wordpress.co...>

When I originally read this children's book, I wanted to make this an extravagant post about the former President during this chaotic transition of power and how I will deeply miss him and how he brought honor and respect to the role of President even though a good percentage of the country wanted to see him burn at the stake or worst. But as time has gone by and the laziness that has kicked in because of school I've decided to simply stick to the book and not the author.

I was disappointed with this children's book for the simple fact that it is misleading and does not feel like the author actually wrote it or rather gave the idea but did not execute it well. *Of Thee I Sing* is a book that Barack Obama wrote in dedication to his daughters and teaching them about women empowerment and how these countless icons have helped paved the way for women especially women of color and how the roadblocks that were presented in their life did not stop them from pursuing their true potential as human beings.

Obviously I am an adult so I knew plenty of details of the women that the author illustrated for this book but if I were a kid I still would not have a clue about half of these women and why are they so significant in the 21st century. I could be completely wrong but I did not feel the passion of how this book was put together and I do believe it is important for kids to read it because there is tons of individuals from all walks of life who has changed the world in one shape or form and do not get the recognition because people want to erase them from history or they do not want these individuals planting the necessary seeds in our subconscious to let us know that we can accomplish anything if we set our minds to it regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation.

I wish I could have given it 5 stars especially since I miss Barack Obama and despise how our current leader has brought nothing but disrespect to the Oval, to its constituents, and our country across the globe. I try to stay away from being political on Goodreads because I believe this site is the ideal place where we can share ideas and not judge those who may have contrasting ideas so I will end my review here for now.

Eva Leger says

I'm not an Obama fan. (I'm exactly whatever is the opposite of 'fan' when it comes to him.) I've seen this book in Wal-Mart for quite some time now and rolled my eyes each time. I assumed I'd know exactly what was inside. In short, a cheesy, for the media book written "for" his daughters. I expected to hate it. I expected to make fun of it. I expected that I'd never, ever, ever read it to my daughter. But it's good. And it's not just 'good'. It's 'really good'. It's almost five stars good to be exact. I'm still blown

away and I read this while walking around Wal-Mart yesterday afternoon. I wouldn't buy this. Unless the money went 100% to charity I wouldn't put a penny in that man's pocket. But I will check it out from the library in order to read it it Julia. I do believe it's a fantastic book for children. I liked the diversity. There aren't just black people, there aren't just white people. There are all sorts of people who did all sorts of different things. I'll admit that this is the opposite of what I expected. All in all this is a beautiful book. And after writing this I decided that it's deserving of more than four stars. I'm going to put five stars on here but it's just slightly less IMO. So, 4.5. This book just may be the best thing that man has ever done.

Mariah says

My students were very excited to read a book that President Obama wrote. This book had a really interesting and different take on educating about a lot of famous, strong individuals that made huge differences in our life.

Iris P says

Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters

Read this at the library a couple of months ago, this short book is at once a series of history lessons and a lovely letter from this very well known author to his daughters.

The book includes bios of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Jackie Robinson, Billie Holiday, Cesar Chavez, Helen Keller, among others.

A charming short book that can teach little children how one person can inspired millions and change the world for the better.

I recommend it for elementary teachers and those with small children (the book is recommended for children as young a 6 years old).

There's also an audiobook version, which I would had purchased had Obama narrated it, but they had someone else do it.

Kathryn says

I tried to approach this book as simply a picture book, ignoring the "celebrity author" and Presidential status

of its author. I figured that would be the fairest approach, trying not to prejudge for better or for worse. And, I ended up really enjoying it! A few phrases got a bit overly poetical or did not flow or match as perfectly as they could, but most were pitch-perfect and very touching. I really appreciate the sentiments about how children can learn from those outstanding individuals who went before them and how there are so many individual traits that make a strong American--and member of the human race. The illustrations are fabulous! I love how one page shows the child-versions of the great Americans, standing beside Obama's own daughters, and how the children begin to swap the "tools of their trade" with one another, sharing their gifts and showing that we can all try new things.

I feel I should point out that this book generated some controversy with the inclusion of Sitting Bull as one of the famous figures to look up to. This controversy comes from both sides as some consider the inclusion of a Native American who killed a US General to be anti-American (<http://www.aolnews.com/2010/11/16/fox...>) whereas Sitting Bull's great-grandson is upset that Obama misquoted his great-grandfather and further feels that Sitting Bull should not be included in a book about famous Americans in this way, "my great grandfather was never American. He was Lakota." (<http://americanindiansinchildrenslite...>) Some controversy also surrounds the fact that the illustration of Sitting Bull gives him the only non-human form in the book (his face is made up of mountains, trees, etc.). Personally, I am not sure I would have found anything to incite my feelings one way or the other when I read that particular segment of the book--taken in the context of the rest of the story, I think Obama was probably just trying to include a wide variety of people for children to look up to--it's blatantly obvious he is trying to be multicultural given the figures he has chosen for the book. However, I can certainly understand the perspective of Sitting Bull's grandson and do think that when the President of the United States publishes a book during his time in office, he or one of his secretaries or editors, ought to have done more thorough research to ensure that he did not offend the Lakota people.

Also, the blurbs about Abraham Lincoln were quite typical with the whole "freeing the slaves" bit and not really going into the full story regarding his Emancipation Proclamation, etc.

Still, all in all, I think this is a very worthwhile book to share with young people--its heart seems to be in the right place and I very much enjoyed its inspirational message, poetic style and gorgeous illustrations. Hopefully it will interest children in looking deeper into the famous persons represented here and they will gain a more thorough understanding of each person in that regard.

Caroline Barnett says

I love this book! There are so many ways a teacher can use this book. I would most likely use this book in a history lesson because of the great historical references made of many inspiring historical Americans. The illustrations are beautiful. You could have your students research the people mentioned in the book as well as President Obama. In the back of the book there are a few facts about the different people mentioned in the book that have help build our country to be what it is today. This would be a good resource for students to start their research!

Kurt says

I took interest in this book after seeing a headline from Fox "News" that said: **Obama Praises Indian Chief**

Who Killed U.S. General. Since Fox is truthful and "fair and balanced" (they couldn't say that about themselves if it weren't true, could they?), I realized that all the books I had read about Native American history must be all wrong. So, Custer was not a Lieutenant Colonel like all the history books say, he was really a General; Sitting Bull didn't stay in camp during the Battle of Little Big Horn like all the history books say, he was really right there in the thick of it, and he personally dealt the mortal blow to Custer; and the death of Custer wasn't the result of native people defending their lives, liberty, culture, traditions, and families from invading forces who meant to take all of that away from them (again, as all the history books imply), instead, those ruthless Indians purposely went out of their way to kill poor innocent whites (who were just minding their own business). I am so indebted to Fox for opening my eyes about this chapter in U.S. history.

Okay, I'm done with the sarcasm. I read this book at a Borders bookstore. It was short, the majority of each page consisted of illustrations that were well-done and pleasing. Each two-page spread is dedicated to someone in U.S. history who has demonstrated some noble attribute in his/her life. The words and the pictures are meant to inspire young children, and well it should.
