

Ms. Angelou's Sweet Song Smells of Honey

By Lauren Ajebon – Winston Churchill High School

I'm so sorry white America.
My bootstraps have been cut off,
the seams ripped from the back of my shoe.

With every inch I crawl, my parent's poverty shackles my ankles
and drags me into the depths of hell.

With every brilliant poem I write comes a pat on the back, yet
a little white girl earns her wings for every adlib she fills in.

Still I Rise.

it's got nothing to do with the back of my shoes.
It's got nothing to do with the money lining my daddy's wallet—which is none.
It's got everything to do with the disadvantage you placed me at,
10 paces behind the starting line before I could even walk.
So when I make it, it won't just be because I'm damn good,
it'll be because I'm better than every Ashley and Hannah you applauded in my wake.
Because I pumped my little legs with the resilience of my ancestors.
Because I was bottle fed with the rage of my grandmother.
Because I was swaddled with the spite of my mother as she rocked me to and fro.

And when I reach that finish line you'll know.
I'll snatch that rusty pair of scissors your granddaddy passed down right out of your hands.
And all the little black children waiting single file with their boots at the ready
will be whooping and hollering in your face.