

Phenomenal Woman: Four Poems Celebrating Women by Maya Angelou. PHENOMENAL WOMAN Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size But when I start to tell them, They think I'm telling lie
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STILL I RISE You may write me down in history With your bitter, twisted lies, You may trod me in the very dirt But still, like dust, I'll rise. 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. Just like moons and like suns, With the certainty of tides, Just like hopes springing high, Still I'll rise. Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eyes? Shoulders falling down like tateardrops, Weakened by my soulful cries. Does my haughtiness offend you? Don't you take it awful hard 'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines Diggin' in my own backyard. 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. 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? 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And your lives, n ever mine to live, will be executed upon the killing floor of innocents. Unless you match my heart and words, saying with me, I shall not be moved. In Virginia tobacco fields, leanin' along Arkansas roads, in the red hills of Georgia, into the palms of her chained hands, I have tried to destroy me and though I perish daily, I shall not be moved. Her universe, often summarized into one black body falling finally from the tree to her feet, made her cry each time in a new voice. All my past hastens to defeat, and strangers claim the glory of my love, Iniquity has bound me to his bed, yet, I must not be moved. She heard the n e, ape, baboon, whore, hot tall, thing, it. She said, But my description cannot fit your tongue, for I have a certain way of bei heads of her children, fluttering and urging the winds of reason into the confusion of their lives. They sprouted like you hein into symbolic topiaries. She sent them away, underground, overl and, in coaches and shoeless. When you learn, teach. When you e, Assured, she placed her fire of service on the altar, and though clothed in the finery of faith, when she appeared at the temple door, no sign of mine alone, and stand as ten thousand. The Divine upon my right impels me to pull forever at the latch on Freedom's gate. The Holy Spirit upon my left leads my feet without ceasing into the camp of the righteous and into the tents of the free. These momma faces, lemon-yellow, plum-purple, honey-brown, have grimaced and twisted down a pyramid of years. S before the abortion clinic, confounded by the lack of choices. In the Welfare line, reduced to the pity of handouts. Ordained in the pul it, in her throat. On lonely street corners, hawking her body. In the classroom, loving the children to understanding. Centered on the world's stage, she sings to her loves and beloveds, to her foes and detractors: However I am perceived and deceived, however my ignorance and conce its, I will be undone, for I shall not be moved. I dedicate this book to the memory of my mother, Vivian Baxter, the most phenomenal. Phenomenal Woman: Four Poems Celebrating Women by Maya Angelou. PHENOMENAL WOMAN Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size But when I start to tell them, They think I'm telling lies. I say, It's in the reach of my arms, The span of my hips, The stride of my step, The curl of my lips. I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me. I walk into a room Just as cool as you please, And to a man, The fellows stand or Fall down on their knees. Then they swarm around me, A hive of honey bees. I say, It's the fire in my eyes, And the flash of my teeth, The swing in my waist, And the joy in my feet. I'm a woman Phenomenally. 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