

Name _____

Date _____



Toni Morrison

If there's a book you want to read,
But it hasn't been written yet,
You must write it.
If you surrender to the air,
You could ride it. Don't try to fight it.
Your story is worth more than your silence,
More than your silence.

(x2)

In 1931 in Ohio, Chloe Wofford was born.
Her baptismal name was Anthony, so she took the nickname Toni.
She loved reading, music, African American culture, and folklore
From her parents who always taught her more.
Her city was integrated, but discrimination lived next door.
Her house was burned down by her landlord for being poor.
There was more in store. She went to college,
Received a bachelor's from Howard and master's from Cornell for all her knowledge.
She met Harold Morrison and had two sons,
Joined a writing group for fun;
It was her way to sort the world out.
She became the first Black female editor at Random House,
Supporting herself and her sons, after leaving her spouse.
At Random House she edited vital voices:
Gayl Jones, Angela Davis, Muhammad Ali, Toni Cade Bambara, and Huey P.
Newton, all of major influence.
She lifted Black voices who were imperative in the movement.
Toni wrote her own work the whole time, and in 1970 she could prove it:

She released her first novel, The Bluest Eye, the first of many in her mind.
She was older than most first time authors but made her own timeline.
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Morrison's work centered Black lives and what they experienced,
Which was traditionally left out in Western literature.
Her stories were full of love and strength and hardship and horror,
And her characters were complex and difficult and beautiful.
Her focus and her voice was so sure.
What does it mean to be American, to live in this great flawed nation?: a theme she explored.
She also used spiritual and supernatural elements within her writing,
Like humans flying. Her imagination was exciting.
It earned her many awards: the Pulitzer Prize,
The Nobel Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
Her books reached many eyes; many loved to read them.
Though there were accolades and widespread praise,
Due to racism some thought her work was overrated and had too much acclaim,
Censored by some schools for writing frankly about life without shame.
She sought to escape the white gaze in so many ways.
2019 in New York at the age of 88 she passed away.
Her legacy through her words lives on and is here to stay.
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