



Maya Angelou

April 4, 1928 - May 28, 2014

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Maya Angelou died in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on May 28, 2014. She was eighty-six. Born Marguerite Annie Johnson in St. Louis on April 4, 1928, she wrote *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and a chain of memoirs, poems, and public readings that made a private history into a national voice without asking permission of the people who had preferred the silence.

She danced, cooked, rode cable cars, lived in Ghana and Egypt, taught at Wake Forest, and treated the stage as a form of citizenship. The first memoir named a childhood rape and a long stretch of muteness; the later books named kitchens, stages, and the work of becoming a person who could speak in public without lying. Stamps, Arkansas, is the childhood town the first book will not let go. Winston-Salem was the last long home.

A memorial was held at Wake Forest. She is buried in Fair Haven Memorial Park in West Oakland, California - not in North Carolina, and not in Stamps. The work is the continuing presence. She left instructions about joy that read, in her voice, like orders.

She collected honorary degrees and kitchen recipes with the same seriousness. Winston-Salem heard the last readings. Oakland, where a son had ties and a plot was waiting, took the body. Stamps remains the town the first chapter will not release. The voice on the recordings is still an instruction. She cooked for friends as seriously as she wrote for strangers. Wake Forest heard the memorial. Oakland took the burial. The recordings remain an instruction to stand up straighter than the century had asked.

Services

Died in Winston-Salem on May 28, 2014. Memorial at Wake Forest University. Interment at Fair Haven

Memorial Park, West Oakland, California.

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