

## Book Review

Pallavi Gogoi\*

MAYA ANGELOU. Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now.  
New York: Random House, 1993, pp. 141,  
Price USA: \$17.00, ISBN: 0-679-42743-0.

Angelou's eventful life woven with her illuminating experiences does find a familiar yet fresh expression in the anthology of her essays, *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now* (1993) that provides glimpses of her personal meditations, filled with her witticisms on life and living. Her reflections come packed in little capsules of thoughts that draw from her subjective experience, her time-tested convictions and the lessons learnt in the journey of life. In broad strokes, Angelou shares her zest for life% unraveling short narratives on the responsibilities of women, on what it means to be a woman, sweetness of charity and charms of contentment, voices of respect and harvests of gratitude, romantic love and sensuality, style and fashion get-ups, traveling exposures and challenges of life's journey, the sense of self and the force of Spirit, power of the word and strength of faith, inevitable death and legacy, black youth and black experiences, gems of wisdom and the utmost necessity of enduring courage.

Much like her autobiographical volumes of Angelou's personal essays are replete with witticisms, aphorisms, some age old sayings of black folks and gems of worldly wisdom. Angelou does not miss out on weaving into her personal narratives, the most valuable and inspiring words of her mother Vivian Baxter, her paternal grandmother Momma and her brother Bailey her constant trio, who at all times had ready proverbs and axioms for every situation that life handed out to them. She had also admitted that it was Momma who had encouraged her to pay heed and try to absorb the hidden messages in what "country people called Mother Wit" with the firm conviction "[t]hat in those homely sayings was couched the collective wisdom of generations" (*Caged Bird*). Moreover, Angelou had always noted that her mother with her truisms could be compared to some kind a 'Godhead' who had always left

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\* Assistant Professor in English, KKHSOU, Guwahati, Assam.

the receiver to 'decipher' the meaning of her aphorisms. Significantly, during her long stay in Africa, Angelou had also found that much like her black folks, the Africans had their own abundant treasures of proverbs and axioms in their folklores and literatures as well.

As an emerging voice of her time, Angelou profoundly articulates her strong convictions and beliefs that stem from her trials and tribulations as a source of inspiration to newer generations, in a traditional chicken-soup-for-the-soul style with her signature flavour of remarkable wit and brevity.

