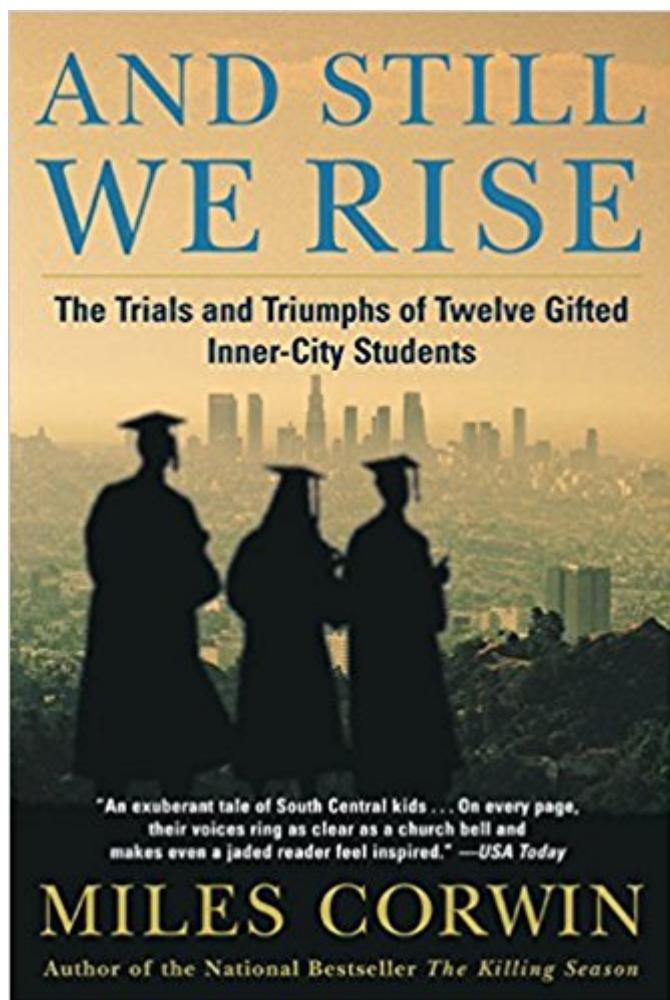


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# And Still We Rise: The Trials And Triumphs Of Twelve Gifted Inner-City Students



## **Synopsis**

Bestselling author of *The Killing Season* and veteran Los Angeles Times reporter Miles Corwin spent a school year with twelve high school seniors -- South-Central kids who qualified for a gifted program because of their exceptional IQs and test scores. Sitting alongside them in classrooms where bullets were known to rip through windows, Corwin chronicled their amazing odyssey as they faced the greatest challenges of their academic lives. *And Still We Rise* is an unforgettable story of transcending obstacles that would dash the hopes of any but the most exceptional spirits.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The typical image of South-Central Los Angeles doesn't lend itself to peaceful and productive high schools. But as Los Angeles Times reporter Miles Corwin chronicles in this troubling yet uplifting book, the ills of the inner city have not completely defeated Toni Little's advanced-placement students at Crenshaw High School, with whom Corwin spent the 1996-1997 academic year as a silent observer. Having grown weary of writing about gang violence, drive-by shootings, and drug arrests, Corwin wanted "to find a way to write about the other children of South-Central, the students who avoid the temptations of the street, who strive for success, who, against all odds, in one of America's most impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods, manage to endure, to prevail, to succeed." He also wanted to show "how truly slanted the playing field remains, how inequality is built into a system touted as a meritocracy." Though 98 percent of the students in the gifted program go on to attend college, it takes a near superhuman effort for them to reach graduation day. In *And*

Still We Rise, Corwin details exactly why. Corwin's poignant portraits of the students and his sensitive evocation of the effort it requires for them to pursue their education are among the many strengths of the book. There's Olivia, the abused former runaway, ward of the county, and gifted student; Sadikifu, the promising Muslim rapper who constantly fights the gritty allure of gang life; and Toya, who lost her own mom to domestic violence and who struggles to balance schoolwork and motherhood. Corwin further explores the intricate intersections of affirmative action, educational expectations, urban neglect, and racism. By turns shocking and inspiring, this is journalistic work that gets to the core of its subject to reveal students who "value education, sacrifice much to further their educations, and overcome many obstacles--including even their own teachers--in order to obtain their educations." It shouldn't be so hard. --Eugene Holley Jr. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Los Angeles Times reporter Corwin offers a viscerally affecting glimpse inside the world of an inner-city high school. Hewing to the approach of his first book, *The Killing Season: A Summer Inside an LAPD Homicide Division*, he followed the seniors in an Advanced Placement (AP) English class from their first day of school in 1997 to graduation. Overcrowded, underfunded Crenshaw High School has a dropout rate of almost 50%. Notorious as the setting for the movie *Boyz 'n the Hood* and as home base for one of L.A.'s worst gangs, Crenshaw is located in the impoverished and crime-ridden South-Central district. The struggling students whose stories Corwin adroitly interweaves face trying circumstances: some have parents on welfare, in prison or addicted to crack; many work at part- or full-time jobs; several cope with the scarring effects of physical or sexual abuse. Yet most minority students in Crenshaw's "gifted magnet program" manage to get As and go on to college. Corwin succeeds admirably in avoiding the cliched image of inner-city schools, with wide-eyed, altruistic teachers and menacing students. For example, he describes Toni Little, the white AP English teacher (nearly all of whose students are black), as a volatile, histrionic personality who frequently involves students in her bitter ongoing battle with administrators. California voted to end affirmative action in 1997, and Corwin passionately argues that affirmative action programs are an imperfect but necessary measure to level a grossly uneven playing field. His profiles of high achievers who shun the temptations of the street are sure to inspire. Agent: Barney Karpfinger. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I purchased this book simply because it was required for a School Social Work class I'm taking. I

ended up finding it very interesting and highly recommend it. More people should educate themselves on the public education system in the United States!!

I just about almost cried towards the end of the last chapter. I am sure if this was a movie I would cry watching it. The struggles these teenagers go through are what makes them want to strive in school. Some are in foster home to foster home and others were abused or in a deadly gang and changed to be a better person for his own life. I liked the character of Ms. Little as I read the second half of the book. She is a teacher who does care about her students being successful and preparing them to pass the Advanced Placement Exam at the end of the year. All-in-all, this book was a great read and I'm glad my teacher assigned it to me! Read it in 5 days with pauses in between to eat and shower and eat of course and going to my religious service.

Really heartwarming stories about real Children in my neighbor hood . -Nate

This gripping immersion into inner city school life makes the perfect companion read to Tracy Kidder's "Among Schoolchildren". From a nice, safe, concerned, caring environment, where the problems are understandable and manageable in "Among Schoolchildren

to have more than just glimpse into the hearts, souls and spirits of these hard-working, driven, focused and gifted inner-city children. When we think our struggles are exhausting, theirs were 10X as great. I've read a number of books, all well-written on similar subjects "A Hope in The Unseen by Ron Suskind" is another excellent read), but in this book I found Miles Corwin wrote in such a way that I was so moved by his character development of each and every one of the twelve students and even his own involvements and deep feelings. Their circumstances, each unique in their own right, were written in such a way that I could FEEL what they were experiencing. I empathized with their struggles and pain, limited resources of their school system (i.e. lack of books and computers), their disappointments, disquiet, anger, anxiety, fears, loneliness, abandonment, alienation from their own peers, community and sometimes family, and ultimately...the joys of their triumph. I was spellbound and deeply moved.

This book is actually quite amazing. Had to buy it for a class my senior year of high school and trust me the first day I opened the book I read 50 pages straight. The cover is so nice came right on time

and the book on its own it so nice. Even after we finished high school without finishing the book I found my own time to actually read it and wow its so good.

This book is very inspiring, and offers a great perspective for teachers and others who work with kids in inner city environments. Some chapters can be a little dense and a little political because it teaches a lot about affirmative action and other more political issues, but if you're reading this to learn, it's absolutely wonderful.

I lived in Suburbia my whole life and I heard about these kinds of stories all throughout my life. Corwin did an amazing job illustrating every student's life. These students go through so much to get intellectually stimulated and to have an education with their peers. I enjoyed how he also dedicated some chapters to the administration and the teachers and all the things that surround the students and the teachers lives -- Affirmative Action, the school, the city, etc. It was a bit confusing since the chapters are named after a student but in between are the daily class stories so it can be a bit confusing. But this is a definite recommended read.

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