



# OF THEE I SING

AUTHOR: BARACK OBAMA

ILLUSTRATOR: LOREN LONG

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Of Thee I Sing](#)

**\*\* REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! \*\***

## OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE BOOK

In this tender, beautiful letter to his daughters, President Barack Obama has written a moving tribute to thirteen groundbreaking Americans and the ideals that have shaped our nation. From the artistry of Georgia O'Keeffe, to the courage of Jackie Robinson, to the patriotism of George Washington, President Obama sees the traits of these heroes within his own children, and within all of America's children. (amazon.com)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barack Obama was the 44th president of the United States, and the first African American to serve in the office. First elected to the presidency in 2008, he won a second term in 2012. Born in Honolulu in 1961, Barack Obama went on to become President of the Harvard Law Review and a U.S. senator representing Illinois. (<https://www.biography.com/people/barack-obama>)

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Loren Long was born in Missouri and raised in Lexington, Kentucky. He lives in Ohio with his wife, two sons and two dogs. He has won several awards. In addition to illustrating, he also writes children's books.

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

*Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:*

- What do you see on the cover?
- Who is the author of this book?
- What do you know about Barack Obama?
- Tell children about President Obama and Loren Long.

### DURING THE STORY

*Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.*

- (p. 1) Is President Obama a proud father?
- (P. 3) I wonder what is meant by "she helped us bring big beauty in what is small"
- (p. 5) I noticed the author used the word braid when talking about Einstein's ideas.

## OF THEE I SING

### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Pursuing dreams
- Diversity
- Heroes

### *Tips for every book!*

### POWER PHRASES:

*I WONDER...*

*I NOTICE...*

*TELL ME MORE...*

### DIGGING DEEPER:

*"Tell me more, why do you think that?"*

*"How do you know that?"*

*"Why do you think they feel like that?"*

*"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"*

- (p. 7) Jackie Robinson, the first black baseball player in the major leagues, gave dreams to other dreamers. How could someone give dreams away?
- (p. 9) Why can't eagles be crows?
- (p. 15) In each page, a character steps out of the group. I wonder why?
- (p. 17) How did the illustrator show that the child needed help?
- (p. 19) What do you think "inspiring" means?
- (p. 21) I wonder what President Obama meant when he said, "You are part of a family." Did he mean more than The President, his girls, his wife and their dog?
- (p. 24) President Lincoln wanted us to behave like kin. What do you think "kin" means?

## AFTER READING

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*Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.*

- What did President Obama tell his daughters?
- How did he tell his message?

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

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- Did any words in the book describe you?
- Which person in the book would you most want to be like?

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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- Let us try to remember the words that President Obama used with "Have I told you." I will call on each of you. If you can't remember, you can pass and a friend can help.

## SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

### 1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

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- Why do you think President Obama wrote this book?
- Some of the heroes in the book lived many years ago. Could we have heroes (not superheroes) today?
- If your father or mother wrote a book for you, would you want to share it?
- I wonder why President Obama chose the heroes he did?
- Were you familiar with some of the heroes in the book?
- Locate a picture of someone you had not heard of. Why do you think the author included him/ her.
- How did the book make you feel?

#### **Suggested Optional Activity:**

- Compare and contrast two heroes from the book and illustrate your list.

### 2. WRITING ACTIVITY

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- Write a letter to President Obama telling him what you learned from his book.

### 3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

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- If you were the illustrator and decided to design another cover for this book, what would it look like and why? Draw this cover, front and back.

## COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy .RL 3.1,3.3,3.4,3.6,3.7