

# *Nikki Giovanni, acclaimed poet, educator and activist, dies at 81*

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New York, December 10 (RHC)-- Nikki Giovanni, one of the most celebrated poets in the United States, has died of cancer at the age of 81.

Giovanni was dubbed the “Princess of Black Poetry” after she published her first collection of poems, “Black Feeling, Black Talk,” in 1968. She went on to publish more than 30 books, including a memoir that was a finalist for the National Book Award and a children’s picture book titled “Rosa,” about the civil rights

legend Rosa Parks.

Nikki Giovanni was a distinguished professor of English at Virginia Tech University, where in the fall of 2005 she removed a student from her introductory creative writing course and reported his disturbing behavior to her department head. That student went on to kill 32 people and wound 17 others in a campus shooting at Virginia Tech, after which Giovanni became a fierce advocate for gun control.

In 2013, Nikki Giovanni joined us in our Democracy Now! studio, where she shared some of her poems.

Nikki Giovanni: "Poetry is as necessary  
To life  
As salt is to stew  
As garlic is to pasta  
As perfume is to summer nights  
As shaving lotion is to mornings  
As your smile is to  
My happiness

"Poetry is as significant  
To life  
As yeast is to bread  
As butter is to toast  
As grapes are to wine  
As sugar is to lemons  
How else will we get  
Lemonade

"Poetry is to me  
Your voice  
Your touch  
Your laughter  
That feeling at the end of the day  
That I am  
Not alone"

Nikki Giovanni has died at the age of 81 of cancer.

[ SOURCE: DEMOCRACY NOW ]

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