

ARETHA ABRAMS

PROMISING NEW TALENT

By Hallelujah Sista

Aretha Abrams has demonstrated that her creativity and talent has played an essential role in transitioning her from a novice rhymer to an established poet.

The Cleveland native is a promising new talent – and she recently showcased her work at WDBZ’s Buzz Book Fair in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Aretha’s inspirational collection brought dullness to life as she displayed her biblically inspired poems from her book, *Naked Lips of Praise* and *Today, A Daily Poetic Journal*.

Visitors who stopped by her booth were both impressed and inspired by the poems they read. As one poetry lover stood next to her reading one of her creations, I took time to talk with Aretha about her poetical journey and her plans for the future.

Hallelujah Sista: Congratulations on all your beautiful poems! Being a poetry lover myself, I must tell you that I’m a big fan of your work. Would you tell our readers what inspires you to write such inspirational poetry?

Aretha: I started writing when I was young. My father wrote and recorded a couple of songs. I believe I got my talent from him. I really started out

writing songs like him but I didn’t play the piano or an instrument so they just ended up being lyrics without music so that didn’t go too far. Anyway, one year in school, my class was given an assignment to write some poetry. When my teacher read what I had written, he encouraged me to keep writing and the rest is history. I’ve been writing them ever since. I love to write poetry because you can say a lot in a few short stanzas. I used to like writing stories but it just took too long to develop everything and for the story to unfold. I like poetry because in a few short lines you can say what you need to say, be done with it and move on to the next one.

Hallelujah Sista: I just have to ask you were you named after Aretha Franklin?

Aretha: That’s a really really interesting question that I get asked about all the time. Yes, I was named after Aretha Franklin. My grandmother named me after her. Truthfully, when I was a child, I didn’t know my name was her name. I didn’t know I was named after a legend. I had to study up on her. We have a lot in common. Her father was a minister, my father was a minister. She used to sing in her father’s church. I used to sing in my father’s church. Well, maybe that’s all we have in common but I love her and I love being named after her.

Hallelujah Sista: I guess you answered my next question. I was going to ask can you sing like her.

Aretha: That's another question that I get asked a lot. I do sing but not like her. I sing like Aretha Abrams and not like Aretha Franklin. There's only one Aretha Franklin and nobody can match her style. I have a voice and style of my own style.

Hallelujah Sista: Okay, getting back to the subject of poetry – do you think poetry is still relevant today?

Aretha: Yes, absolutely yes. When I think about the bible and hear people quoting a Psalm, I know poetry is still relevant because the Psalms David wrote are poetry. David was able to capture the spirit of praise and put it in a form that is not only beautiful but memorable. I believe people are still in love with poetry. If they weren't, Valentine's Day wouldn't be relevant, Mother's Day wouldn't be relevant, Sweetest Day wouldn't be relevant either. People come up to me at events like this all the time and tell me how much they like poetry or they write poems. When I ask them where their work is, they tell me it's at home in a notebook or they have it written down but haven't taken it to the next level. I always encourage them to publish their work. You never know who you'll touch with what you write and what you say.

Hallelujah Sista: What do you say to people who say that poetry is worn out and obsolete?

Aretha: Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. It's definitely not obsolete. Poetry comes in all shapes and forms today. I think people have a great appreciation for it. We live in a sound bite society. If you can't say it in small concentrated messages then people don't have time for you so if you have something to say, you have to use small bite size pieces or people will lose interest fast.

Hallelujah Sista: You've written a volume of poetry entitled, *Naked Lips of Praise*. Tell our readers how you came up with that title.

Aretha: Well, lipstick is my favorite cosmetic. I can't go anywhere without it. One particular day, I was rushing out of the house and I forgot to put on my lipstick. I got in my car and was well on my way. I forget where I was going but I remember sitting at a stop light and I looked in my rearview mirror. When I realized I didn't have any lipstick on I said, "Lord, you let me come out of the house with naked lips." The spirit whispered to my heart plain as day that it doesn't matter if you have lipstick on as long as you keep the name of Jesus on your lips. That's how I got the name.

Hallelujah Sista: Wow! That's pretty powerful. And I see you have a second volume of poetry entitled, *Intimate Sin Intimate Savior*. Describe these poems in a few words and talk to me about the inspiration behind them.

Aretha: Intimate Sin Intimate Savior is more introspective poetry. It's about the choices we make in life. Sin can become very intimate with you. The more you sin the more it knows your

wants, your thoughts and your desires. It can begin to control your environment, the people you hang with, and the things you do. It can control you so much that it ultimately begins to isolate you and will destroy you if you let. The counter side to that is Jesus, the intimate savior. Jesus knows you better than anything or anyone because the bible says that all things were created by him (Colossians 1:16). If you turn to the Savior you will ultimately turn away from sin so these poems are reflective of turning away from sin and turning to the Savior.

Hallelujah Sista: That's really awesome. What's next on your poetic path?

Aretha: I'm just going to keep on writing. I'm really in a good place. I'm enjoying life. I'm happy. I'm having fun. I love to write poems for people. I've met a lot of wonderful people. I like to help them express what they really feel in a way that touches them personally and reveals true expressions of love. It's very fulfilling for me when I'm able to help someone move beyond a dark place in their life or celebrate a birthday or anniversary or retirement through a poem. I'm able to take what they tell me and hammer out a poem in a way that they never expected. For the future, I'm looking to have all my poems published. I'm really anticipating that happening for me but until then I'm just going to keep doing what I love to do.

Hallelujah Sista: What advice do you have for other aspiring poets out there?

Aretha: Follow your dreams and remain focused. You've got to be your best PR person. Push yourself farther

than you think you can go and you'll go farther than you ever imagined you could. Pray a lot and keep the faith because along the way you'll have distractions that will throw you off track. Stay true to yourself and true to what you do. Listen to your heart and pray for God's clear direction. Don't give up on yourself and don't give up on your dreams no matter how long it takes for them to come true. Hang around people that inspire you and do the things you want to do. Let them propel you into the next level. There comes a time in your life when you have to know what you believe and who you believe in. Let your work be your worship unto God. Do the things that are pleasing to Him. Do your best and let God do the rest.

Hallelujah Sista: Where can people go if they'd like to check out your work?

They can log onto my website: www.arethaabrams.com. If you click on the Daily Devotional Poem tab, it will take you to the title poem of my book *Naked Lips of Praise*.

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