



## Nikki Giovanni

Yolande Cornelia “Nikki” Giovanni was born on June 7, 1943, in Knoxville, Tennessee. She grew up in an all-black suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio, but spent summers visiting her grandparents in Knoxville. She loved hearing her grandmother’s stories about her ancestors, which greatly influenced her own love for writing. She explained in an interview, “I come from a long line of storytellers.”

Giovanni self-published her first book of poetry, *Black Feeling Black Talk*, in 1968. She has since published over two dozen books, including *Rosa* and *Hip-Hop Speaks to Children*, and won many awards.

She prides herself on being “a Black American, a daughter, a mother, a professor of English.” Her distinct and imaginative poetry is inspired by her fascination with people and their emotions. It is also influenced by music and her passion for social equality. She is currently a professor of English and Black Studies at Virginia Tech.