



# I Heart Obama

Erin Aubry Kaplan

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In his nearly two terms as president, Barack Obama has solidified his status as something black people haven't had for fifty years: a folk hero. The 1960s delivered Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, forever twinned as larger-than-life outsiders and truth tellers who took on racism and died in the process. Obama is different: Not an outsider but president, head of the most powerful state in the world; a centrist Democrat, not the face of a movement. Yet he is every bit a folk hero, doing battle with the beast of a system created to keep people like him on the margins. He is unique among presidents and entirely unique among black people, who never expected to have a president so soon.

In I Heart Obama, journalist Erin Aubry Kaplan offers an unapologetic appreciation of our highest-ranking "First" and what he means to black Americans. In the process, she explores the critiques of those in the black community who charge that he has not done enough, been present enough, been black enough to motivate real change in America. Racial antipathy cloaked as political antipathy has been the major conflict in Obama's presidency. His impossible task as an individual and as a president is nothing less than this: to reform the entire racist culture of the country he leads. Black people know he can't do it, but will support his effort anyway, as they have supported the efforts of many others. Obama's is a noble and singular story we will tell for generations. I Heart Obama looks at the story so far.



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