I Heart Obama
By Erin Aubry Kaplan

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.
The Archaeology of Darkness
Edited by Robert Hensey and Marion Dowd

Key Features:
• Explores the human use of dark spaces, especially caves, from the palaeolithic to modern times
• Examines how the senses are affected in caves and monuments that have been used for ritual activities including funerary activities and rites of passage
• Considers how interactions between people and darkness have affected individuals in the past and how such interactions may have transformed places in the landscape

Through time people have lived with darkness. Archaeology shows us that over the whole human journey people have sought out dark places, for burials, for votive deposition and sometimes for retreat or religious ritual away from the wider community. Thirteen papers explore Palaeolithic use of deep caves in Europe and the orientation of mortuary monuments in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. It examines how the senses are affected in caves and monuments that were used for ritual activities, from Bronze Age miners in Wales working in dangerous subterranean settings, to initiands in Italian caves, to a modern caver's experience of spending time in one of the world's deepest caves in Russia. We see how darkness was and is viewed at northern latitudes where parts of the year are spent in eternal night, and in Easter Island where darkness provided communal refuge from the pervasive sun. We know that spending extended periods in darkness and silence can affect one physically, emotionally and spiritually. How did interactions between people and darkness affect individuals in the past and how were regarded by their communities? And how did this interaction transform places in the landscape? As the ever-increasing electrification of the planet steadily minimises the amount of darkness in our lives, curiously, darkness is coming more into focus. This first collection of papers on the subject begins a conversation about the role of darkness in human experience through time.

About the Author:
Marion Dowd is a lecturer in prehistoric archaeology at the Institute of Technology, Sligo where she specialises in the Archaeology of Irish caves and how they have been used from the Mesolithic through to post-medieval times, whether for burial, excarnation, veneration, occupation, refuge or as hideaways. She has many research interests including Mesolithic Archaeology, Folklore and archaeology, archaeology of emotion, Funeral Practices, and Votive offerings.
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