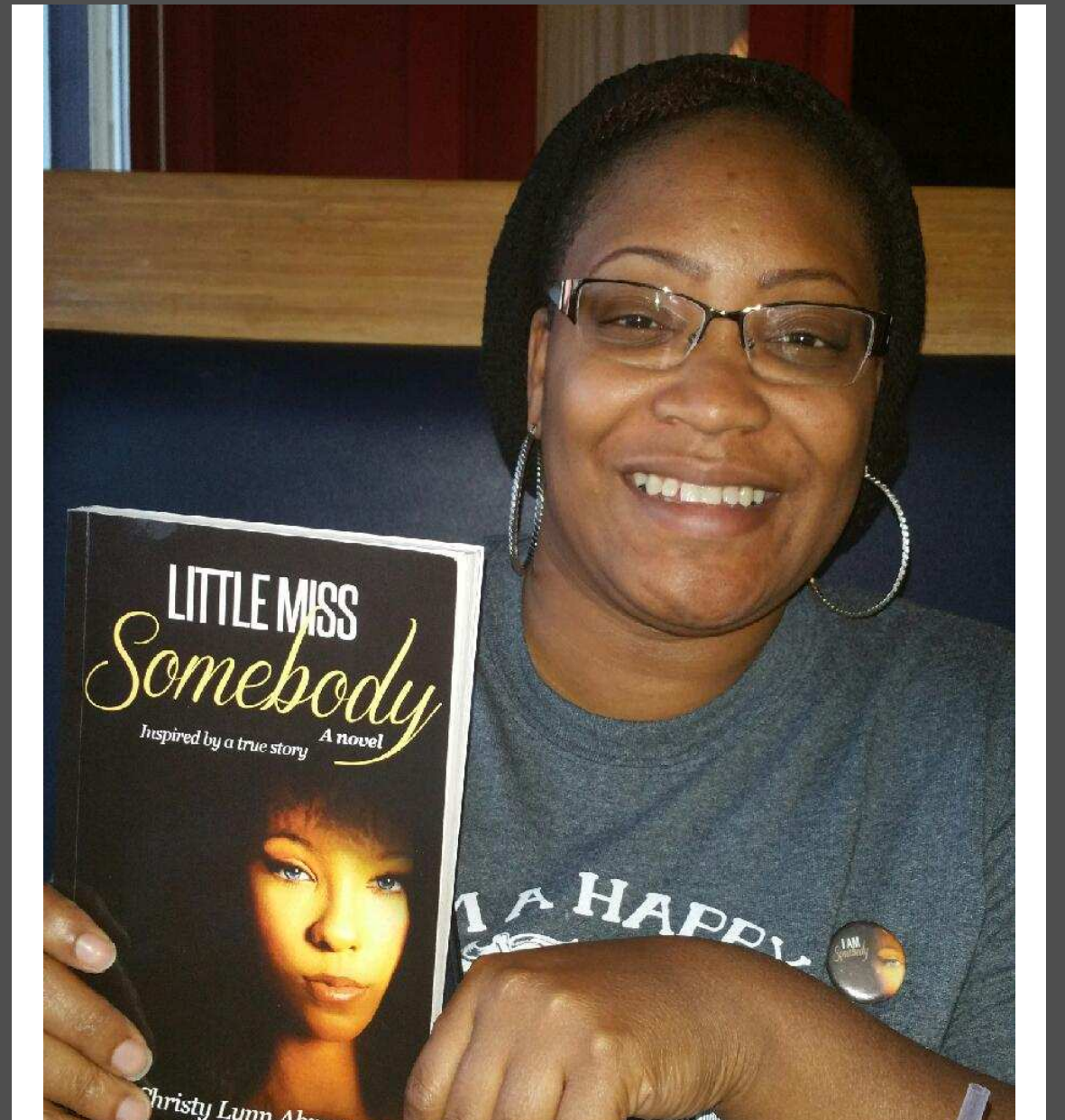
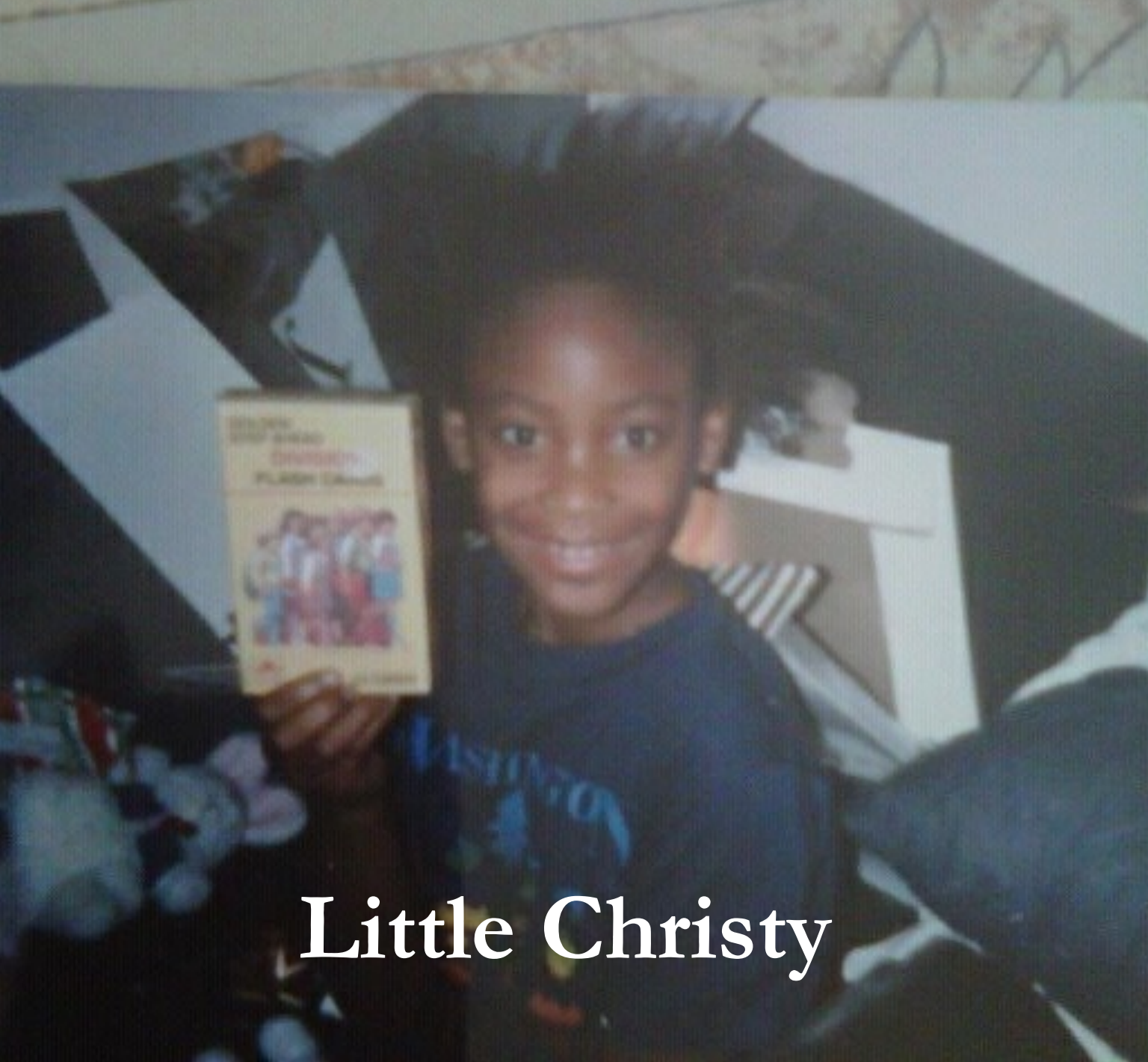




Holding Space: The Importance of Helping African Americans Heal through Storytelling

Christy Abram,
Brown Girls Write
www.browngirlswrite.org





Little Christy



My Childhood

I grew up on the
Northside of St.
Louis, Missouri. This
is my family home.



My Grandparents: Connie and Howard



Welcome
to The
Lou

People from St. Louis have a very distinct accent. Our “r’s” are long: Heerrre –Here Theerre -There

Common Names for African American Speech



AFRICAN AMERICAN
VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE)



BLACK VERNACULAR ENGLISH
(BVE)



EBONICS



“Melody or pattern
which characterizes a
natural AA accent.”

The African American Experience

Our struggle lives in our narrative. Our stories encompass the whisper of our ancestors and the pathways to break the generational chains that bound us. When we're forced to conform, we lose a piece of our identity.



**AAVE terms you may
know:**

1. Bae

Boy/Girl Friend or Significant Other

2. Snatched

Attractive or Stylish

3. Turnt

Excited or Energized

4. Fire

Cool, Good, or Stylish

“

Everyone, including Black people, is erroneously taught that Black genius is more or less, public property with no clear 'ownership.'

-Chaédria LaBouvier



Code-switching

Alteration between two or more languages. In our case, the shift is between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard American English (SAE).

Examining AAVE

BROWN
GIRL
YOUR STORY
MATTERS



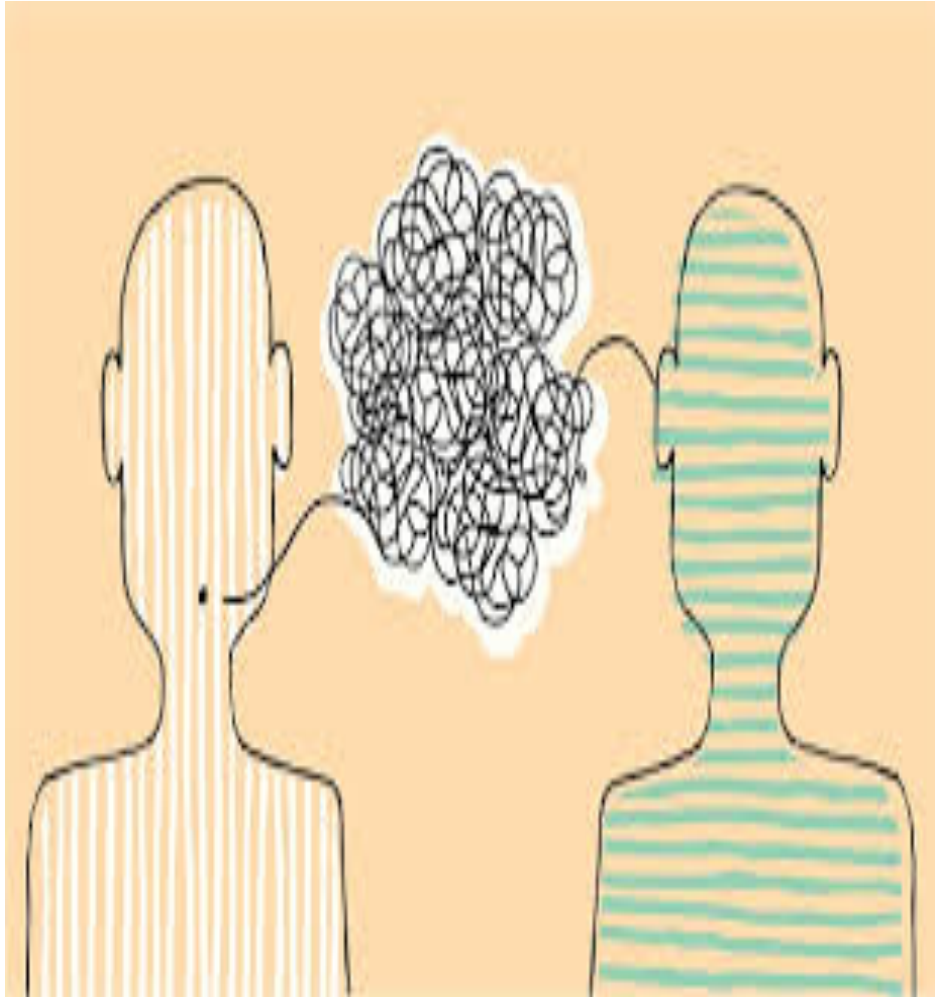
To “Black Folk,” AAVE offers a degree of normalcy to a community of individuals who’ve been taught code-switching is needed to survive.

WHEN YOU CODE SWITCH AT WORK



https://youtu.be/lhJ_5Je3oEY

When is Code Switching Most Prevalent?



- In the presence of whites
- In employment interviews
- In formal educational settings
- When attempting to meet societal norms

Holding Space for Black Authors

When an AA author shares their experience using AAVE, they are giving the reader a bird's eye view into their world.



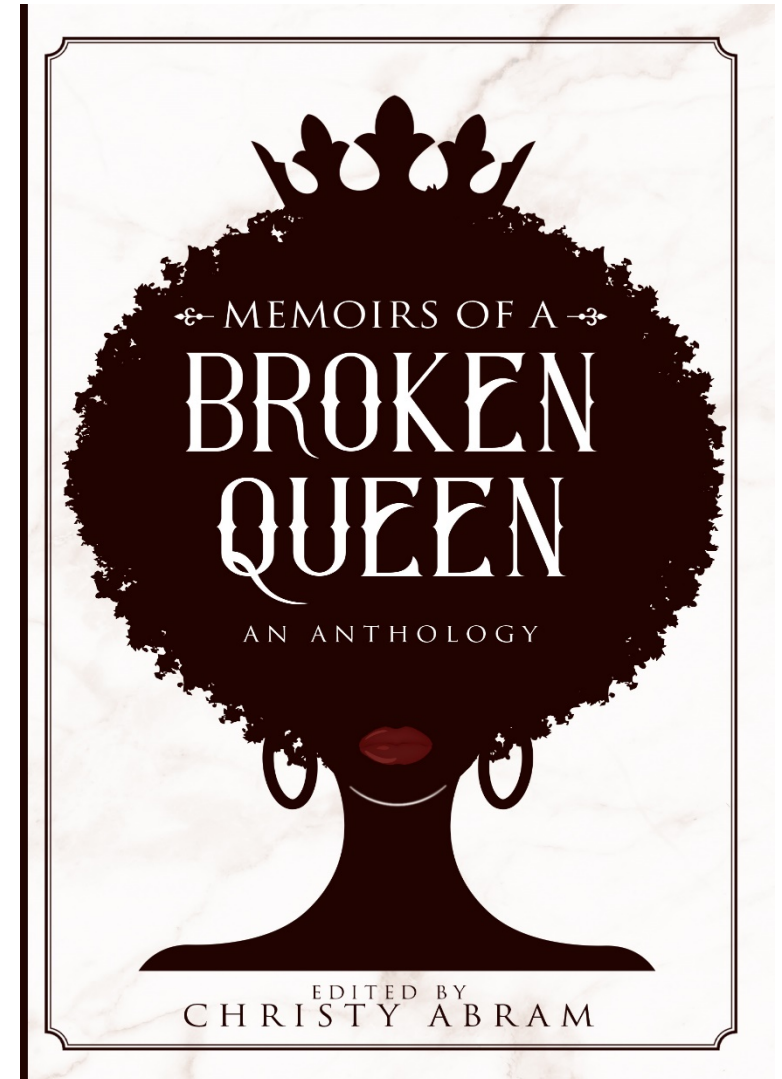
Holding Space of Black Authors



We offer a whole-body experience that extends beyond our language. We want you to see, smell, and feel your way through our narratives.

Editing Black Narratives

Memoirs of a Broken Queen, a compilation which features the stories of eighteen brave brown women.





DID YOU KNOW?
We have a shared history
of progress in Black history.

M.C.
#BlackGirlsRock

SMOOTH JAZZ
Music: Smooth
Host: [unreadable]
[unreadable]

GirlT

cisco

Restoring Black Voices

Women of color who have endured traumatic experiences often feel unheard and unsupported. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that women of color experience a higher rate of sexual violence yet are the **LEAST** likely to report their experiences.



Stereotypes of Black Women



Aggressive



Ghetto

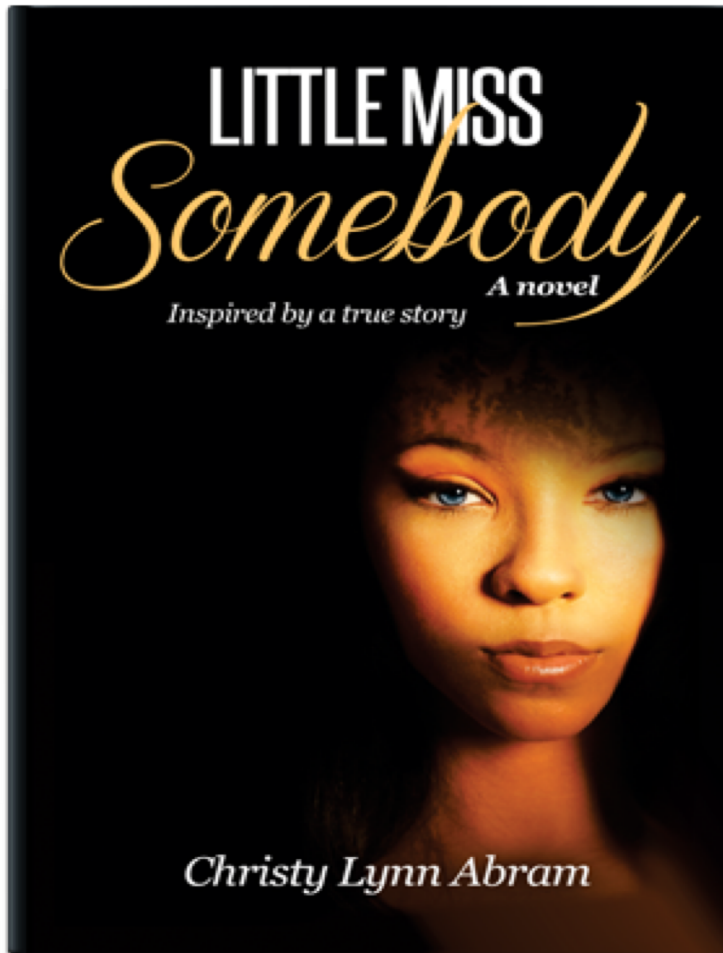


Loud



Angry

Editing Black Narratives



Little Miss Somebody follows Nikki, a fourteen-year-old girl who is desperately trying to escape her dysfunctional family.

Meet My Editor, Rachel



Rachel: Just getting a feeling for your protagonist’s “voice.” Should I correct grammar like this:
Me and my cousin, Meechie, both went to King. -----> My cousin Meechie and I both went to King.

Or do you want to keep it improper grammar for the right voice?

Me: Here is the tricky part, they live in St. Louis and the grammar there is definitely country (improper). I see your point though. I feel it is OK when the narrator is speaking.

Rachel: Absolutely tricky – agree that it is a narrator voice. So I’ll try to keep that voice consistent, even if it’s “improper” grammatically.

Meet My Editor, Rachel Cont.



Rachel Lipetz MacAulay Me? I'm humbled, Christy Abram. I look back sometimes and think I did it all so wrong. But I'm learning, and you were a big part of that. I'm thrilled daily reading your updates and seeing you go go go!!

Like · Reply · 3h

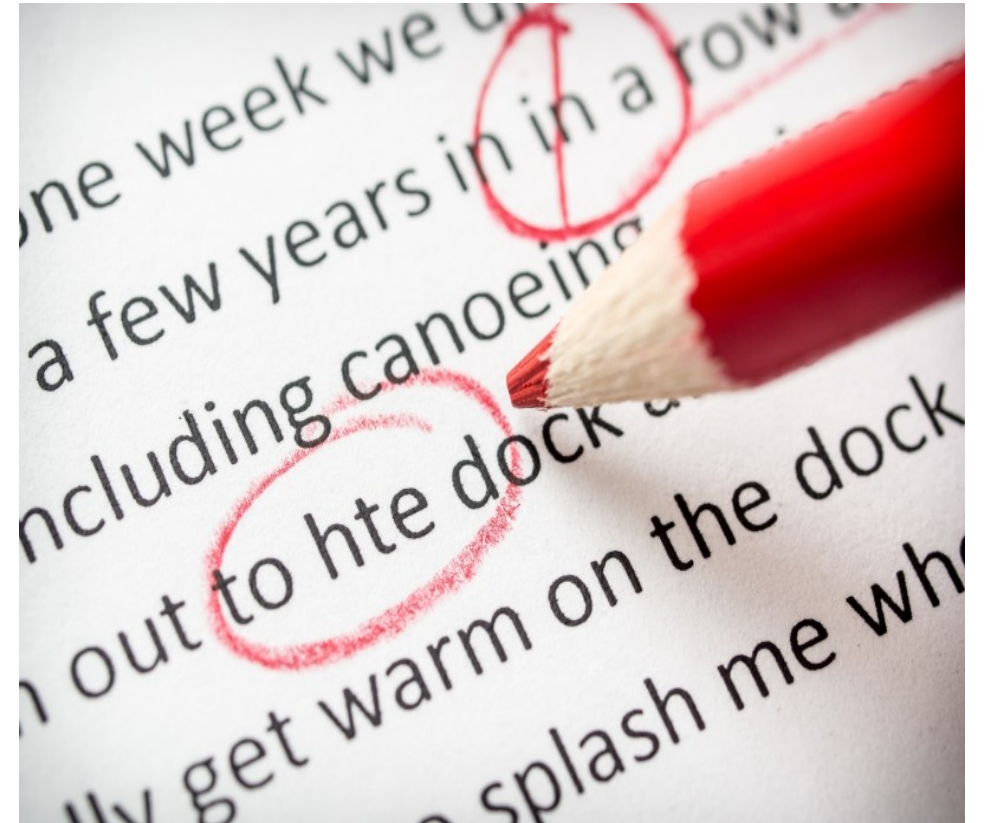


Write a comment...



Mindful Editing

For editors who do not have the experience of working with African American authors, merging AAVE and SAE can be challenging. Your editor brain will want to turn “Herrre” into “here,” but changes like these can be offensive to the author.





Exercise Time!

Follow the instructions on your handout. You have 10 minutes to edit the passage.

After, we will have a discussion.

The Passage

Mama gazed slightly in my direction before sifting her attention to her cellphone. “What are you talking about, little girl?” Her nose twitched as she pursed her full glossy lips.

“You need to worry about graduating high school and less about my bidness.”


“But, Mama...” I reasoned. Before I could finish my sentence, her body straightened releasing the back of the plush grey loveseat.

“I said mind your fuckin’ bidness! Now shut the hell up talking to me!”

I sunk in my seat holding my lips tight. The last thing I wanted was for Mama to get up and slap me in the hell outta me. I hated living with her. She never listened. She always mad and going off. I couldn’t wait to graduate and bail outta there. I can’t stand her.



*Any
Challenges?*



How to work with
Authors who
share their
experiences using
AAVE.

1.

Ask and ASK again

If you are unsure of the author's intention, ASK. Most authors are open to feedback. However, assuming could cause friction.



2.

Edit for the Reader not Yourself

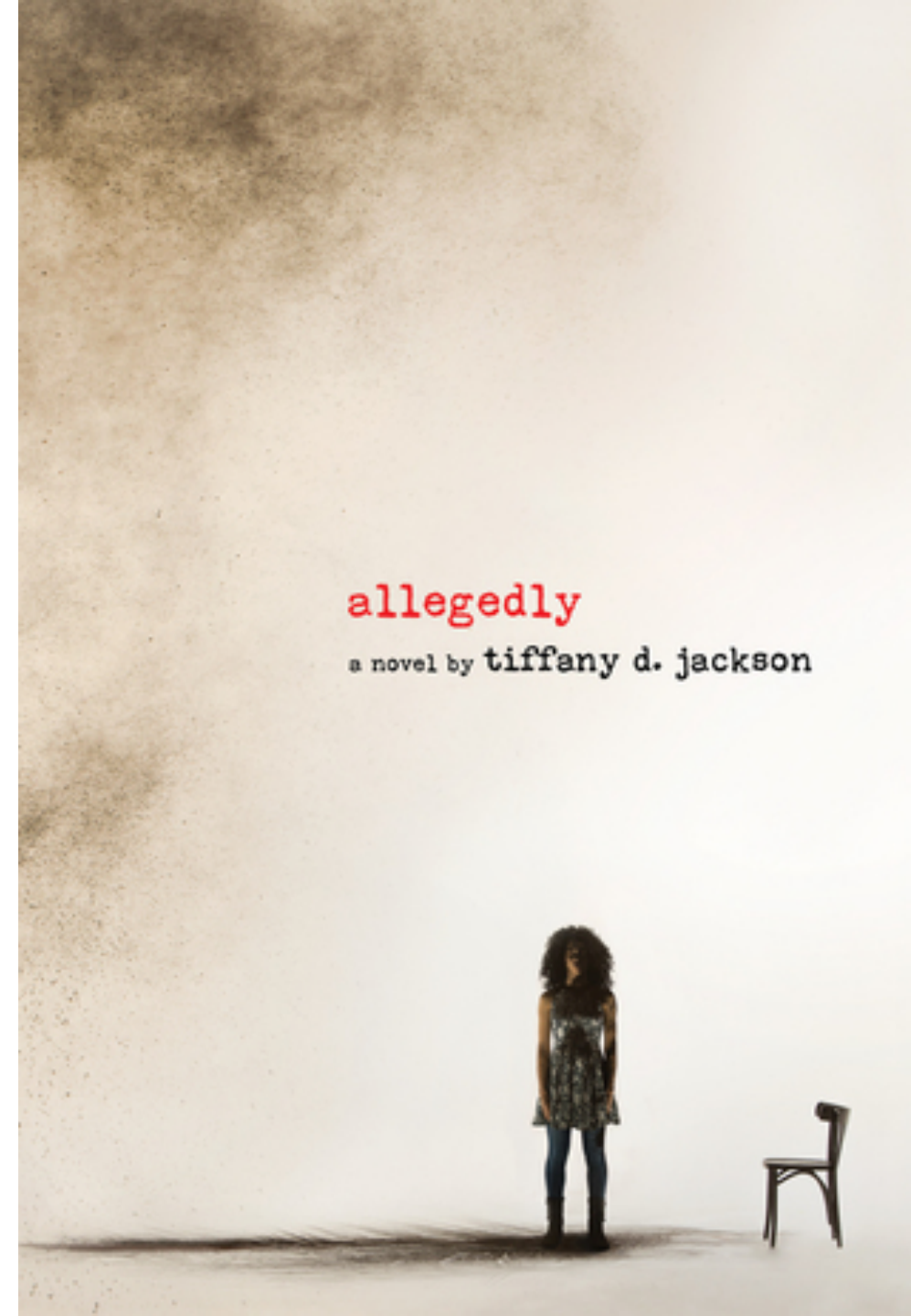
Determine if changing the language is beneficial to the passage. Be mindful about the author's intended audience. Edit with care.



3.

Do your Research

When editing for AA authors it's important that you familiarize yourself with their book's genre and style of writing. The best way to this is homework and diversifying your reading list.

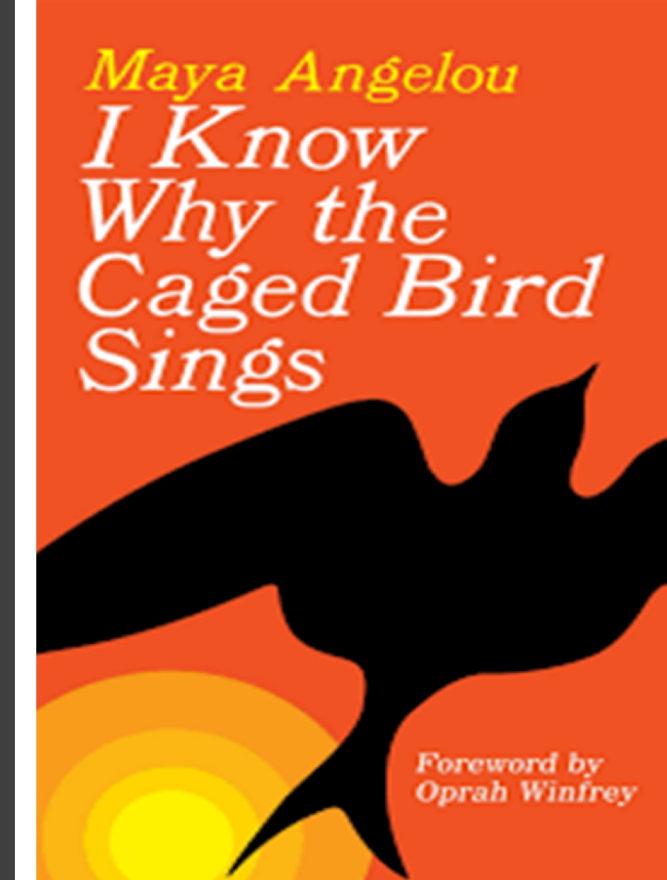
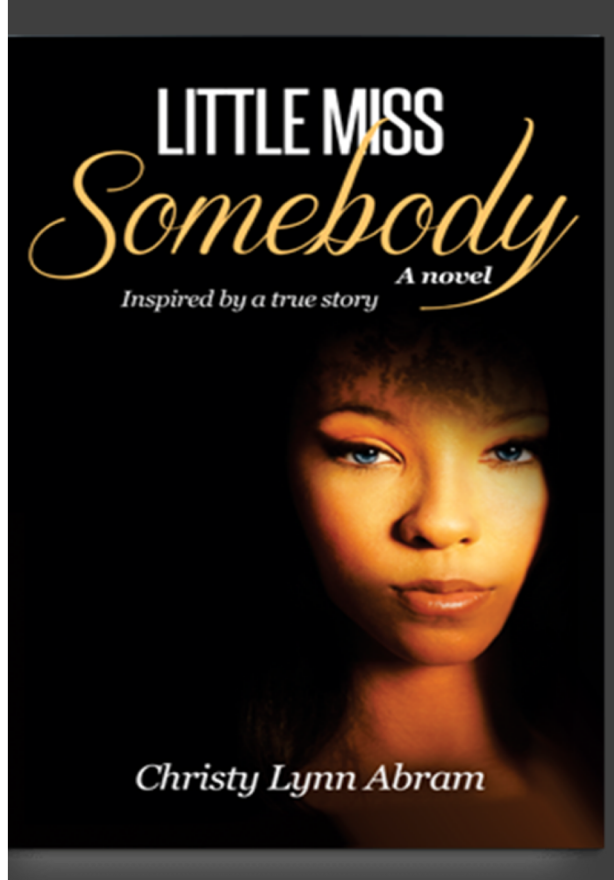




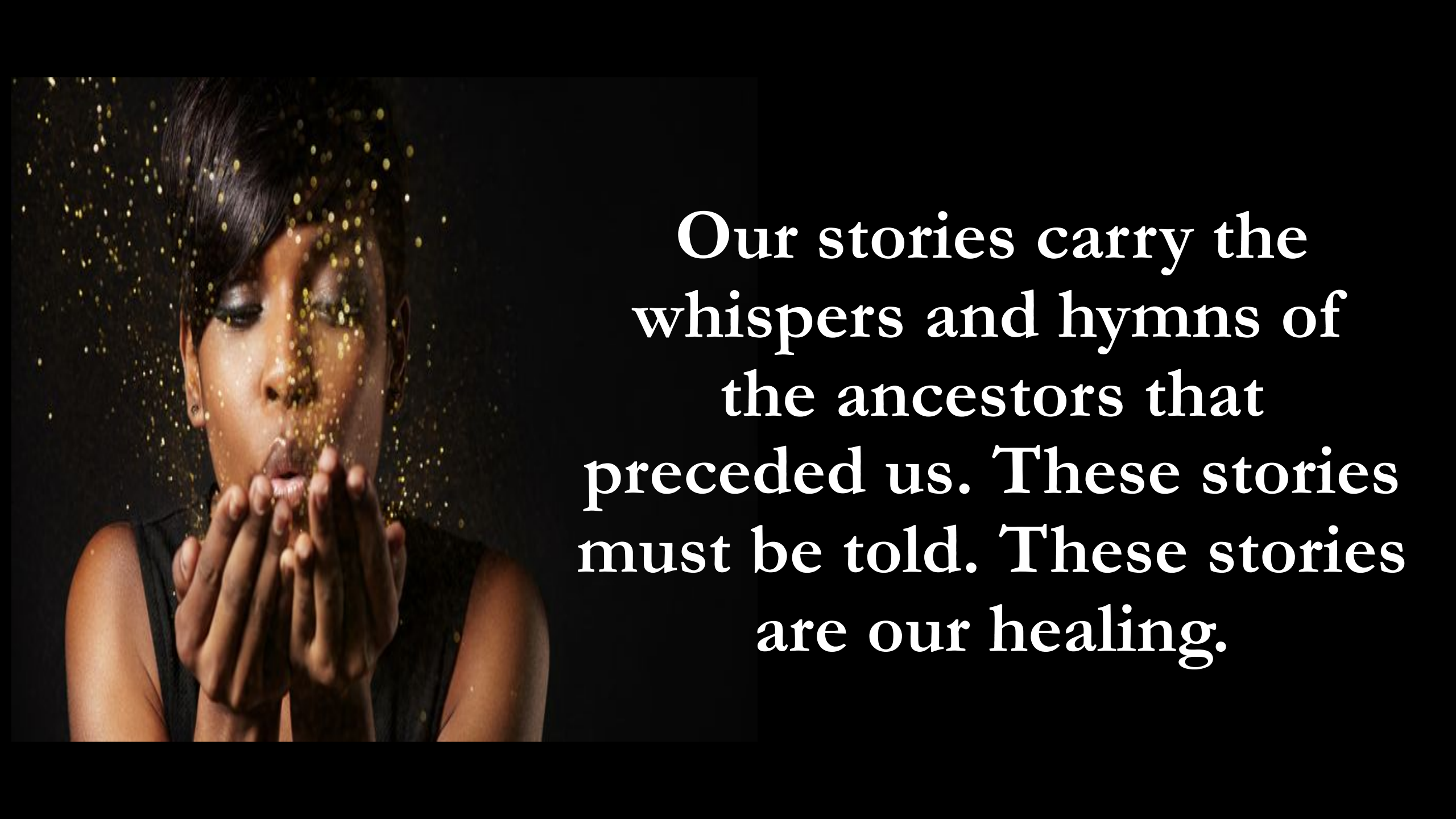
4.

Don't Replace without Consent

Do not replace *AAVE* with *SAE* or other forms of *AAVE* without consulting with the author. This can be seen is highly disrespectful. *ALWAYS* ask if you're unsure.



Famous Books that Use AAVE

A woman with dark hair and eyes is shown from the chest up, blowing a stream of gold glitter into the air. Her hands are cupped together in front of her mouth. The background is black, and the glitter creates a shimmering, ethereal atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Our stories carry the
whispers and hymns of
the ancestors that
preceded us. These stories
must be told. These stories
are our healing.**

GirlSpeak™
Mount Rainer HS
2019



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION! ANY QUESTIONS?