

READING and WRITING in the

# DARIK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*

NEWSLETTER

# ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

**FEATURE:**

**Will AI make  
writers and artists  
OBSOLETE?**

Page 5

Also:

**From Iyapo's Blog  
The Trouble With  
Surface Level  
Thinking!**

Page 9

**We've hit the  
ONE YEAR mark!**

**And the coming year  
is FILLED with  
surprises!** Page 3

For July we have a Crossword  
Puzzle and the answer key to  
last month's Word Search!

**News and Information about Completed  
and Upcoming Projects and MORE!**



# READING and WRITING in the DARK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*

## NEWSLETTER



### CONTENTS

WELCOME BACK! ..... Page 2

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY Reading and Writing in the DARK! ..... Page 3

Will AI Make Writers and Artists OBSOLETE?! ..... Page 5

July Crossword Puzzle: Theoretical Ebon Fiction (TEF) ..... Page 6

Book Review: The Path To Brightness ..... Page 8

From Iyapo's Blog: The Problems With Surface Level Thinking ..... Page 9

CERTIFIED HUMAN ..... Page 11

### WELCOME BACK!

In this edition of the Reading and Writing in the DARK newsletter I did an entire article going over the past year and how excited I am to be hitting this milestone. No, a year isn't a long time relatively speaking, but at the same time, a LOT can happen in FIVE MINUTES, so there's THAT. Anyway, I want to thank EVERYONE who is a new subscriber to the newsletter as well as those who have been hanging with me since the very beginning and those who have joined us everywhere along the way!

I've seen a LOT of newsletters, and I say with proudly that I've never seen any newsletter quite like this one! Being one who is always trying to do the MOST, I'm happy to bring you a newsletter that you can read and enjoy! In this coming year I will be making some additions and upgrades to the newsletter to make it even MORE interactive by adding even more content, contests and giveaways! My goal is to introduce a WOW factor into the newsletter, while at the same time keeping you up on what I've written, what I'm writing and what others are doing in the world of Theoretical Ebon Fiction. So all that said, I'll save some for the article and stop here!

SEE YOU ALL NEXT MONTH!

Iyapo Yapa



#### And What of the CARGO? Is finally here!

"Kylah Mbaye of the Zahnoka people, lay as silently and still as she could, halfheartedly petitioning the ancestors that at least for one night she would not be spirited away and taken above deck to endure yet another in a procession of endless rapes. Another woman would have long ago given in to despair--but Kylah--in the face of such crushing odds against her and her people within the bowels of this floating nightmare, knew that eventually, this voyage would not end well... for her captors." And so it began. AND WHAT OF THE CARGO? is a tale of love and hate, tears and triumph, suspense and horror that leads to an unimaginable conclusion.

"The Atlantic crossing, or "Middle Passage," as it was called by European slavers, was notorious for the number of deaths incurred, averaging in the vicinity of 15-20%"

— Walter Rodney. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

Much is rightly said and written about the enslavement and fates of Afrikans who were kidnapped from their homeland and transported to the Americas and other lands along the Middle Passage. Absent however is an expanded examination of the fate of those who did not make it through the journey. Whether victims of an inability to survive the unimaginable environment in which they were forced to occupy, or due to murders while attempting to revolt, or by simply jumping overboard, choosing death as a better alternative to chattel enslavement.

What of those ancestors in the depths of the oceans, and what of their souls and spirits. Or to put it bluntly—what of the CARGO?

AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW!

#### And What of the CARGO?

Purchase now by clicking the logo below!



You can also read it for FREE if you have Kindle Unlimited!  
You don't need a Kindle to read it, you can download the free Kindle app from your Android Store or from the Apple Store and read Kindle content on your favorite devices!



Click the image above to watch the And What of the CARGO? COMMERCIAL!

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## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY Reading and Writing in the DARK!

Well, it's been a GOOD year!

The FIRST issue of my *Reading and Writing in the DARK* newsletter debuted one year ago this month and a LOT has happened since then. I have seen the release of TWO novels and TEN short stories from the Theoretical Ebon Fiction Anthology *Paradigm VOID*, under the Keepin' it a BUCK Series banner! AND I created an exciting Kindle Vella series *Surviving the WORST!* A story I'm really having a lot of fun with!

In the past year I've seen my works on Amazon at NUMBER 1 in their respective categories, and I've seen them dip down into the low hundreds. (Still not so bad when you consider there are literally tens of thousands... maybe even hundreds of thousands of books available on the platform in any given category.) The whole thing has truly been a rollercoaster ride!

I ran into some things I expected and planned for, and I also hit obstacles that even if I had KNOWN they would have been there I would have been unable to plan for them. But all and all, it has been an exciting thrill ride. I've completed several projects and have so many more on the table that should keep me busy for years to come! I've met new people and joined a couple groups, one of them being a book club made up of several brilliant Black ladies. They invited me to talk about my debut novel *MELANIN*, and I ended up joining after we discussed the book *Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry*. The discussion was so interesting that I decided to join the group. The name of the book club is The Bookenistas – And a Guy. (I'M the guy!)

I've been working on a lot of projects this year, not the least of which is the second book in the *MELANIN* trilogy! That one won't be out for some time, but when it is, it's going to be GREAT! The long awaited (and unfortunately delayed), first installment in the *Tales of the Monkey's Paw* series will drop in August at long last! And *Paradigm Void*, the collection of short stories that made up the Keepin' it a BUCK series will be released soon as it already past its second edit. Following close on the heels of that release will be ten MORE exciting short stories in the *Paradigm VOID* universe, that will make up the book *Further Journeys into the Paradigm VOID!* I will also be releasing the sure-to-be-controversial novella *The Redemption of Maxine Allison!* (I'm already bracing myself for the repercussions of this one! I can't even imagine what is going to be said about it, but we shall see!)

As an independent author, I've been doing extensive work to be visible and doing all I can to get the word out there about my work and to bring it to as wide an audience as possible! (Please connect with me on social media. I'm hanging out as "@iyapoyapa" on the usual haunts as everyone else: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and soon TikTok.)

The big tool in my toolbox is my website <https://www.iyapoyapa.com>! That's where you can find out pretty much everything that I

work on or do! My writing is there, along with my art, my music and all kinds of interesting things that I really think you'll enjoy if you take the time to poke around in there.

Presently my site can be viewed on a cell phone, but it, in my opinion, admittedly does not look the best on those kinds of devices. My website is best viewed on a desktop or laptop computer or using a tablet. That's where you can see it in its full glory!

My website also has a couple EASTER EGGS that diehard fans are SURE to not only enjoy, but be surprised by. I guarantee it! The Easter eggs aren't marked, but they are surly there, so take some time and check it out.

**I ran into some things I expected and planned for, and I also hit obstacles that even if I had KNOWN they would have been there I would have been unable to plan for them. But all and all, it has been an exciting thrill ride.**

Looking back, I realized I've had an incredibly productive year! I mentioned I completed two novels, a book of short stories, and a novella. I have two Kindle Vella series. (Yes, I said TWO! We all know about *Surviving the WORST!* but to find out what the second one is, you'll have to find one of the Easter eggs hidden in my site.) PLUS, I managed to illustrate a children's book—T.J. Riley's *The Money Tree*—while I was

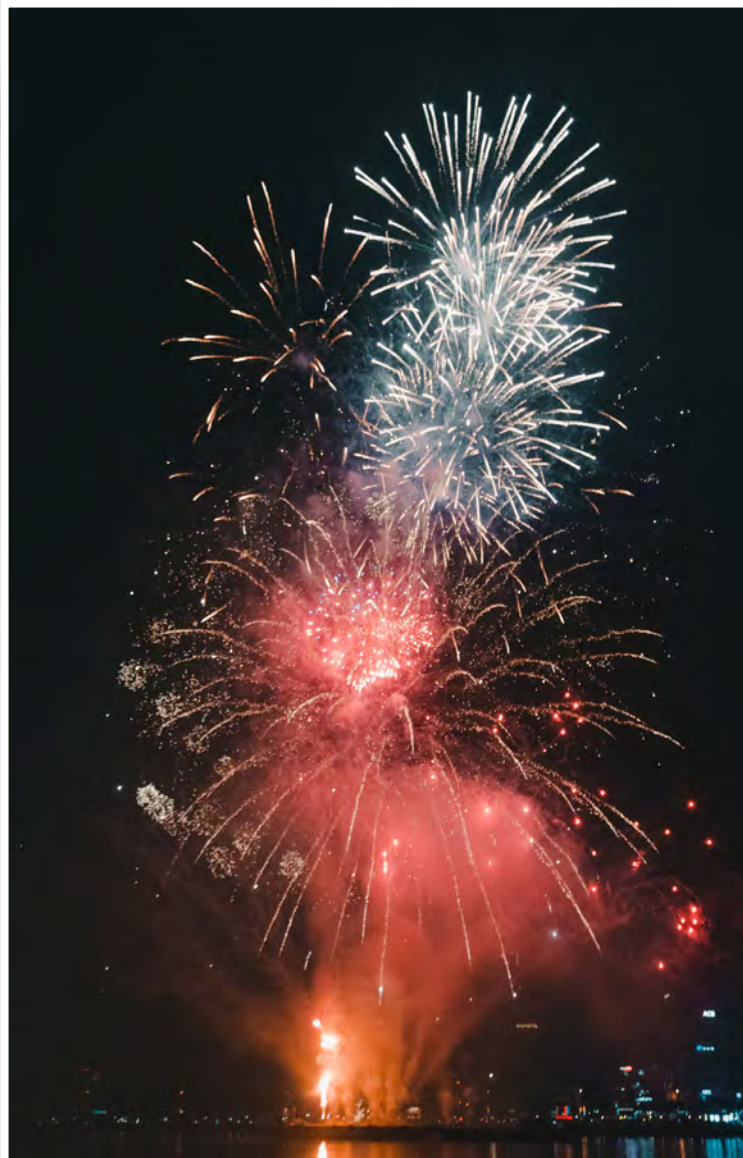
at it! I've designed book covers for myself and others and started the *Reading and Writing in the DARK Podcast*, as well as the *Reading and Writing in the DARK* newsletter you're reading right now.

As I look back at how much I've accomplished this year, it makes me all the more excited about the future and what it will bring. Yes, it's a lot of work, but it is a work I genuinely enjoy and look forward to every day!

To the readers of my newsletter, and to you who purchased my work and give me feedback (and even to you who don't), I want to say a big THANK YOU! Because it is for YOU, I create these things. With each thing I write, draw or create, I do it ALL with my people in mind. I am playing my part to, as we say at DoEAiA Media, "Take control of our own narrative!"

Also, next month there will be a BIG announcement about *MELANIN: A Novel* to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the breakthrough release of my debut work! (I am so grateful that people are still buzzing about it!) I'll definitely give you details in the August edition of the *Reading and Writing in the DARK* newsletter!

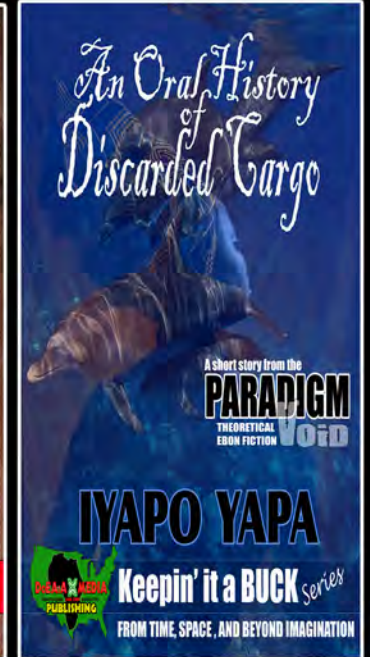
Thank you and I look forward to another year—a BIGGER year of CREATION!



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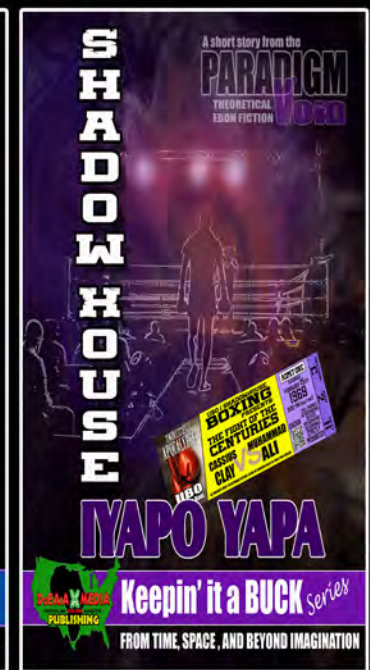
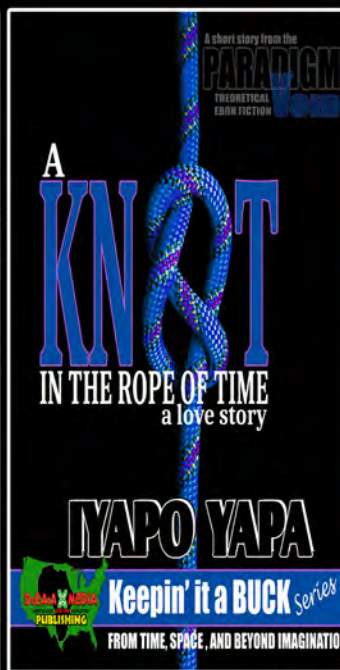


IT IS TIME TO JOURNEY INTO THE **PARADIGM VOID** ONE STEP AT A TIME.

EACH SHORT STORY IS DIFFERENT. EACH ONE THOUGHT PROVOKING & MIND BENDING.  
EACH ONE ONLY **A DOLLAR!** AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW ON: [amazon](https://www.amazon.com)



## Keepin' it a BUCK series



Also, Keepin' it a BUCK series TWO: Stories from Further Journeys into the Paradigm VOID is out NOW!



Also remember:

ORAL TRADITION talking books are also coming soon!  
Click the image to the right to hear a sample, of one of our talking books. Yes, it's still in its rough form, but the story is still fun as all get out! So give it a listen!

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## Will AI Make Writers and Artists Obsolete?!

The Black writer's group to which I belong, sat beside the beach discussing our work and upcoming projects, just as we do every week. On this particular day we met a young Black man who was piloting a drone and eventually walked over to where we were. Introductions followed and we informed him that we were a writer's group. His face lit up and he exclaimed that he happened to be a writer, so we invited him to sit in.

We continued to talk about our work, our processes and such, and then our visitor brought up something called ChatGPT.

Most of us looked at him much the way a puppy might look at something it had never before encountered but was trying to grasp the concept.

Once we got a rudimentary understanding of what the thing was, the unanimous consensus was that it might have some practical applications in terms of editing, but as far as replacing actual writers, or being something creative writers should use to do the "grunt work" for them, this new ChatGPT thing got a resounding thumbs down from the group.

Fast forward several months and it seems there isn't anyplace I can go without hearing something about ChatGPT or some other form of AI. I'm seeing article after article about human beings who are losing their jobs to ChatGPT and other forms of AI! Photographers and illustrators are also having their struggles against this emerging technology!

Like it or not, AI looks like it's here to stay, and it seems to only be gaining traction as the technology continues to improve by leaps and bounds.

CREATORS! Viewers ooooh'ed and ahhhh'ed the first time we saw Jurassic Park and the Matrix. We are seeing disturbing advances in AI. But NOTHING can replace the SOUL of the CREATOR. My advice to young people is LEARN to PLAY and instrument. Learn to WRITE stories ALL from your own head. Learn to DO from YOUR OWN NON-COMPUTER ASSISTED gifts and talents because AI can do just so much!

We've all heard someone who can sing and never hit a sour note, they can run up and down scales flawlessly... but there is just something missing... that SOUL is missing. Another singer can step up not sing anywhere CLOSE to the technical expertise of the other singer, but when that second singer sings... you feel an uncontrollable desire to dance, or you sit quietly as silent tears wash over your cheeks. It is that SOUL that touches you and to which you can relate.

So yes, AI can create it quick, fast and in a hurry.

Yes, AI can present virtually flawless works of music and visual art.

Even in something like mathematics, AI can do the calculations in the blink of an eye, but mathematicians—TRUE mathematicians, see the beauty of the equations, the art of it and the connection to creation. For some of them, by their own admission, that connection brings them to the point where they have gone from being atheists to having to admit that there MUST be an intelligent designer of it all.

**Like it or not, AI looks like it's here to stay, and it seems to only be gaining traction as the technology continues to improve by leaps and bounds.**

To the creators especially, as I wrote at the outset... learn to DO and to do so without the assistance of a computer. And once you know that—then the computer becomes a tool to help you efficiently realize your vision, but you MUST have the FOUNDATION first... the BASICS, and later high levels of expertise.

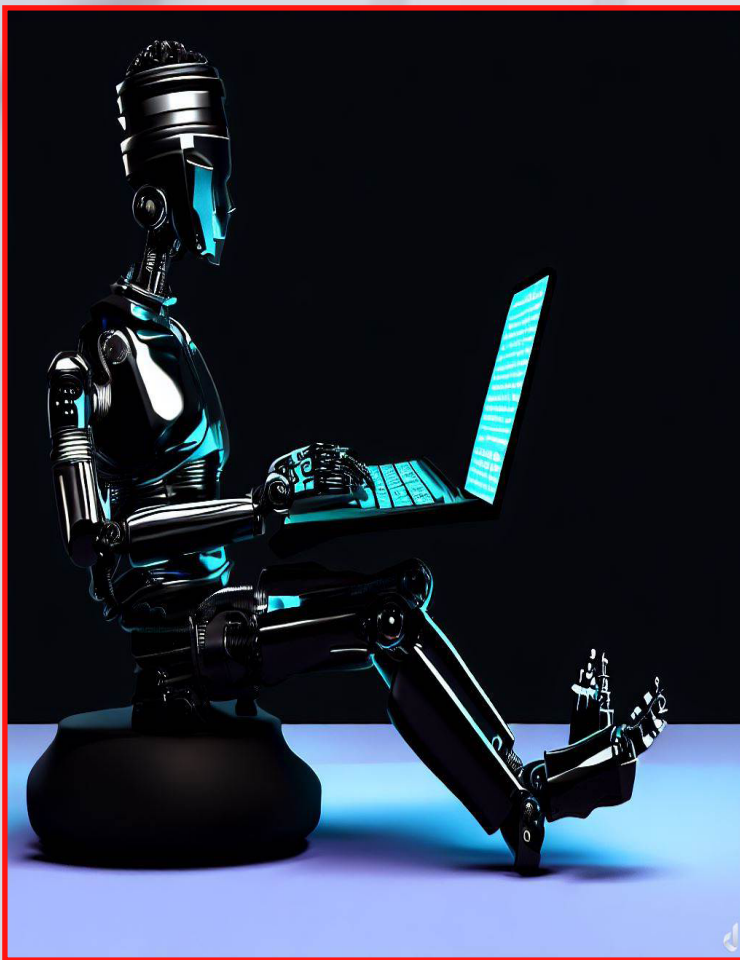
Mark my words, things come in waves and human beings are a fickle and jaded lot.

I'll close by saying this: Though it may seem that the public is now gravitating toward the lowest common denominator, toward the most mediocre of us, there will always be a place for a good story well told or a piece of art that is created by the soul of an artist. In the same way that I am hearing reviewers talk about bad CGI in movies that twenty or thirty years ago would have had them falling out of their seats (some of that CGI being on regular television series such as Superman and Lois and The Flash), there is just so far computer-generated images can carry a movie or media form. For some of these big budget special effects extravaganzas—like the highly anticipated, recently released MEGA bomb The Flash—no amount of special effects can save them. Simultaneously viewers are discovering and rediscovering series like the original Twilight Zone and Outer Limits. The effects are antiquated, and in some cases even laughable, but the STORY'S the thing, and the story supports the program.

So, take heart and don't let these new technologies make you too uneasy.

Quality work will ALWAYS rise to the top sooner or later.

*\*(Article image created using AI).*



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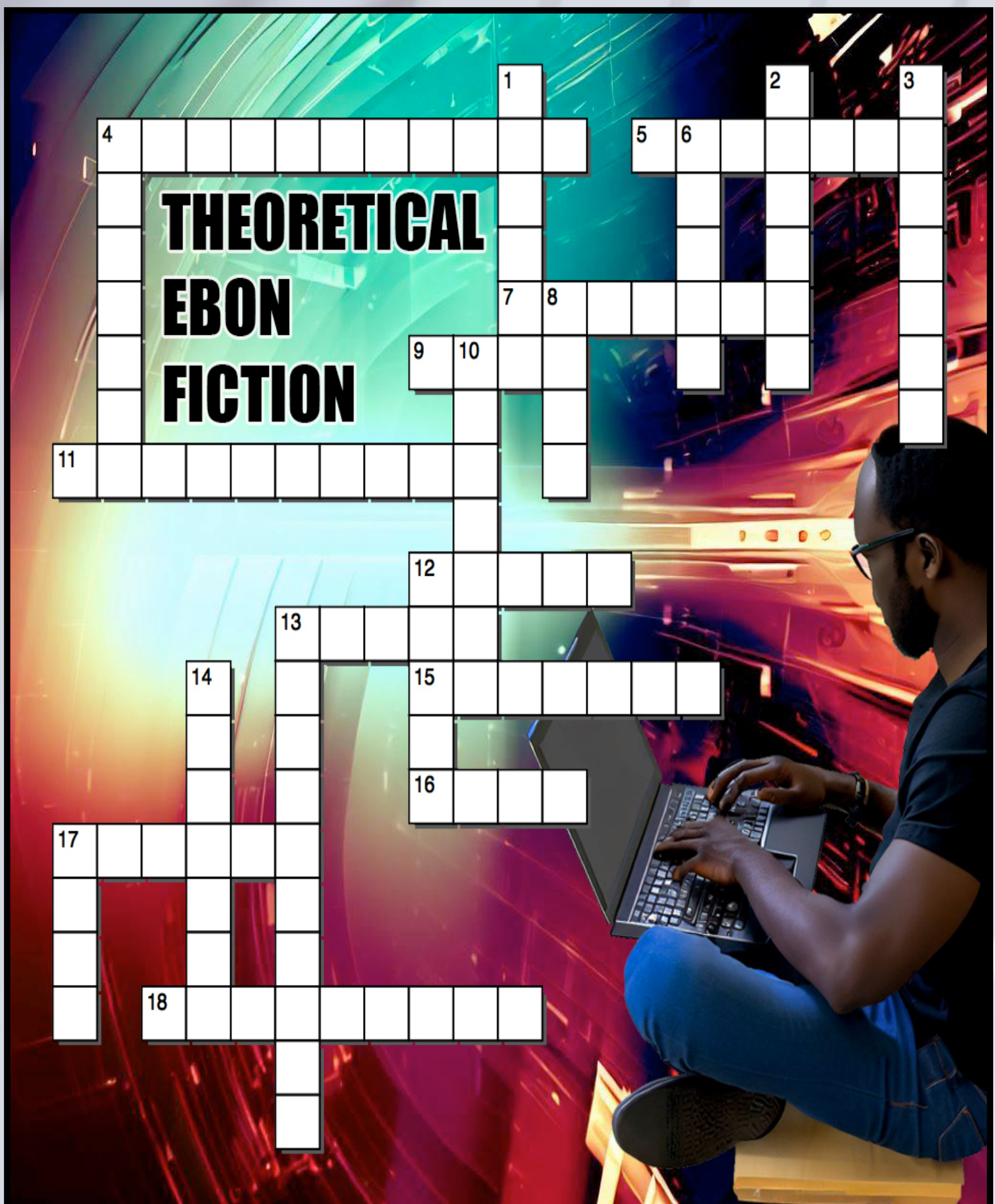
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## July Crossword: Theoretical Ebon Fiction (TEF)

This month's Crossword Puzzle questions pertain to THEORETICAL EBON FICTION (TEF). Some of the clues are about authors, some are about their work, some questions have to do with TEF in other media. The answer key to last month's word search is at the back of the newsletter, and the answers for this issue's crossword, as always, will be in next month's edition of the READING and WRITING in the DARK Newsletter. HAVE FUN!

[CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO DOWNLOAD A PRINTABLE COPY OF THE PUZZLE!](#)



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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE QUESTIONS

### Across

4. The genre “Afrofuturism” is more accurately described by this name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ebon Fiction.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Sower is a classic book by Octavia E. Butler.
7. What does the “E” in Octavia E. Butler’s name stand for?
9. Octavia E. Butler character entity who changed bodies like clothes and killed the hosts.
11. Author of *The Wishing Pool*. \_\_\_\_\_ Due
12. Second novel by TEF writer Iyapo Yapa. *And What of the \_\_\_\_\_*.
13. Steven Barnes novel about an alternate America. *Lion’s \_\_\_\_\_*.
15. Debut novel by Iyapo Yapa. \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Series about a Black family in 1953 that was terrorized by white people in their new neighborhood, and malevolent entities inside their home.
17. *Outer Limits* episode written by Steven Barnes that won an Emmy Award. “A \_\_\_\_\_ in Time”.
18. Author of the Dystopian TEF novel *Goliath*. To chi \_\_\_\_\_.

### Down

1. Title of the anthology of TEF: A Century of Speculative Fiction From The African Diaspora. Dark \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Author of *Nana* and *The Landlord*. Brandon \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Author of the short story, “The Slave Traders”, about aliens who come to earth and make a deal with the government to give up their Black people. \_\_\_\_\_ Bell.
4. Author of *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. Amos \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Author of the TEF books *This Black* and *This Black Nation*. \_\_\_\_\_ Shabazz.
8. Genre where fantasy meet urban environment. Sword and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Author of *Beneath the Shining Jewel*. Balogun \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Story by W.E.B. DuBois that was made into a motion picture, but for which he was never given credit. “The \_\_\_\_\_”.
13. Debut novel by T.J. Riley. *The Path to \_\_\_\_\_*.
14. Author of the novel *Relay* and the upcoming Scifi anthology *Strange Tales of Science Fiction*. Charles L. \_\_\_\_\_.
17. HBO science fiction anthology series that featured George Clinton of Parliament as the host. *Cosmic \_\_\_\_\_*.



If you’re needing to get your **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION (TEF)** fix, THIS is the place to go!

*PARADIGM VOID* is a collection of short stories written by Iyapo Yapa, one of the new leaders in the field of Black Science Fiction and Speculative Fiction. Each story explores possibilities and concepts that were not long ago only within the domain of the standard Sci-Fi reader.

Now, with the insurgence of Black writers of TEF, Iyapo is adding his powerful voice to the chorus, and moving at full speed to work in our people taking control of our narrative!

In *PARADIGM VOID*, Iyapo explores things like:

- What if somewhere in the universe numerous alien races observed earth and concluded that there is a faction on the planet that in no way should ever be allowed to reach out beyond the bounds of its own atmosphere?
- What if the universe itself started taking measures to correct and bring balance to itself in terms of justice?
- What if time slowed down nearly to a stop ... but only for YOU?

These possibilities and more are examined in “PARADIGM VOID” a collection of ten short stories in the genre of **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION**.

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## Book Review: The Path To Brightness

Fatima Wood is a highly successful Black woman. She has it all! Dream job at which she is well respected, beautiful home, money, handsome fiancé who loves her to pieces. But things make a shift when she drowns in the bathtub and is declared dead. Hours (yes, HOURS) later, she comes back to life in the morgue—much to the horror of the staff present. After that, her life and understanding of the world and people around her, as well as her perceptions of the physical and metaphysical had forever changed.

Many unexplainable phenomena start happening to her, nearly always coinciding with the appearance of a strange red-haired woman who is always seeming to elude her. With the main character, there was genuine sexual tension going on that I found very real and relatable. I also feel that Fatima's resolutions of it were realistic.

There are many "Wow!" moments in the book. One in particular where I said "WHAAAAT!" and then messaged the author immediately to tell her about my shock! But I LOVED it. That moment came out of nowhere, with no warning, but shows the true randomness and unpredictability of life. It struck me as VERY real! Possibly even MORE important... it did not read as a cheap plot device, but as something that was very possible and fitting within the world the author created.

The book is a love story, a mystery, a suspense novel and a journey into the metaphysical that could make some (like me) a bit uncomfortable, while still being unable to stop turning pages. There are genuine thrills in this book, as well as twists I in no way saw coming. (And I'm pretty good at seeing things coming!)

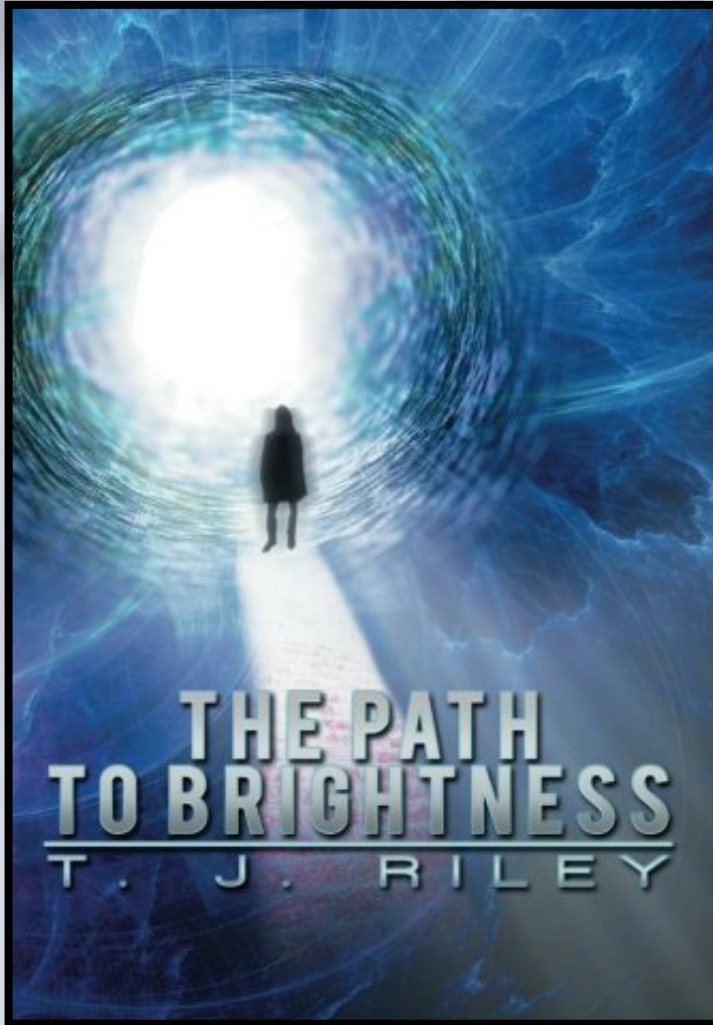
*The Path to Brightness* also has very real stakes: If Fatima is unable to discover and fulfill her destiny, it means the end of the world. Are THOSE stakes high enough for you?!

There are books that can be read casually. Romance and suspense

and a lot of speculative fiction stories and novels come to mind. But then, there are books we must read and really pay attention to. *The Path to Brightness* is one of those books. If one isn't paying attention, they may miss key details.

There are many "wow!" moments in the book, one in particular where I said "WHAAAAT! And messaged the author immediately to tell her about my shock!" but I LOVED it.

As mentioned earlier, there are aspects of this book that might make a person—depending upon their belief system, or prior belief system—a bit uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable. That said, it serves as an intense book that, as stated, demands your attention. Though it is in NO WAY a "hard" book to read. It will make you smile; it may make you cry, and it will definitely provoke thought.



T. J. Riley resides in Harper Woods, Michigan, outside Detroit. She comes from a family of storytellers, starting with her own mother, Sylvia Stone-McDuffie. Her grandsons Rah and Jahi Humphrey are the authors of the *Chocolate League*, a series of chapter books for children, and her son Mosi Humphrey has won several writing awards. Ms. Riley holds degrees in geography and African history and has been a student of world religions, spirituality, the occult, and alternative-consciousness thinking since age seven. As a writer, Ms. Riley hopes to challenge readers to re-think the legends of creation and the meaning of life.

### What are readers saying about *MELANIN: A NOVEL*?

"Melanin is an uncompromising and timely tale of speculative fiction, brimming with thought-provoking ideas and imaginative twists."

- Brandon Massey, award-winning author of *The Quiet Ones* and *Dark Corner*

"Iyapo Yapa has earned a place among the great science fiction writers with *Melanin*. The plot twists will keep you reading long after midnight. As well the imagery is captivating. Replicating the Black experience, you are drawn into the story as if you are there."

- T.J. Riley, author of *The Path to Brightness*

"The whole world needs to read this book!"

- M.A.D.M. Precious, author of *Michelle's Story* and *Loving Betrayal*

"Every Black person needs to read this book!"

- Gwen B

"It was exciting! I stayed up a few nights wanting to see what was coming!"

- Ayoka B.

AVAILABLE NOW!

**MELANIN: A NOVEL**

Buy it now on Amazon



goodreads



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## THE PROBLEMS WITH SURFACE LEVEL THINKING

From IYAPO'S BLOG Tue, 02 May 2023

I saw a post on YouTube that featured a man identifying himself as "Hispanic", explaining the difference between his people and Black people and why they are able to do better in the U.S. (or at least among their own people), than Black people are.

This kind of talk is one of my main triggers!

It is the WORST kind of unexamined, analysis lacking, surface thinking CRAP our people are subjected to 25/8/366.

The REAL question is: (In America at least), what other race has been under CENTURIES of oppression, marginalization, terror, and has an entire govt and system that ACTIVELY works against them?! A system that has grown more sophisticated and advanced in its approach. A system that has become more entrenched and fortified with each passing decade. Oh sure... every "minority" gets grief, but Black people are very specifically TARGETED for destruction and are bombarded cradle to grave with images and media that tells us NON-STOP that 'we ain't shit' : Like the clip highlighted.

It is wrapped in the GUISE of being 'helpful' but is actually just yet ANOTHER in the propagandistic, problematic, slaps in the face telling our people basically that WE are THE problem, and we are A problem, and we just can't get our shit together (the undertone being: because everyone else is somehow better than us).

Wrong answer.

As a people, we go to SUCH great lengths to try to distance ourselves from the "Pookies, Ray Rays and LaQuitas, that we lean ALL the way to the other side and start throwing our own people under the bus. When the fact is that if we were to get out from under the forces of this System of White Supremacy, once we distance ourselves from it, the saner we become.

Scientists and psychologists did studies with rats to see what would happen if they were put in close quarters and given limited resources. Of course, levels of violence exploded and there were overall demonstratively negative results.

<https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/22514/1/2308Ramadams.pdf>

So, what did white society do? They designed communities based upon that model for the express purpose of getting our people to the point at which we are right now so that not ONLY would it (in their minds), justify their brutality against us, but

so that it would have the same effect on everyone ELSE... INCLUDING OUR OWN PEOPLE!

And it worked like a CHARM!



I often refer to an OVER TWENTY-YEAR study pertaining to homicide in the middle and upper class that showed that in OVER TWENTY YEARS, ZERO homicides were committed by Black people who were not piled on top of each other and just living life without being in a pressure cooker in addition to the racism we ALL are subject to. OVER TWENTY YEARS... ZERO by Black people on ANYONE Black, white or anything else.

<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6119&context=jclc>

After that study, no other study of that kind was ever done again.

Gee... I wonder WHY?!

Probably because society knows that the result will once again be nearly the same. Thus, PROVING ONCE AGAIN that our people are not inherently violent or the worst there are, but that it is the circumstances in which we have been forced and continue to live (by DESIGN of a SoWS), that has created this problem and perpetuates it.

And for those who would say, "We need to just 'snap out of it'" I say, that is like telling our people we need to just 'snap out' of speaking ENGLISH. We were RAISED in it, SURROUNDED by it, TAUGHT it, and IMMERSSED in it from the moment we were BORN. HOW are we supposed to speak anything ELSE? And how could we even know whether we have an option NOT TO? And even if we exercised that option, learning an entirely new language is more than a notion and infinitely more difficult and involved than just saying "You need to speak your native language."

We were born and RAISED in this mess and are bombarded NON-STOP with this, but we are supposed to somehow magically "snap out of it".

I wish our people would come off this surface level thinking. If anything, THE SURFACE THINKING and LACK OF ANALYSIS is the reason we are not moving forward, NOT that we are behaving in a way in which we have been trained, surrounded by and groomed in for CENTURIES, and CONTINUE to be.

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## THE PROBLEMS WITH SURFACE LEVEL THINKING (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Tue, 02 May 2023

From the time of Lincoln (and INCLUDING Lincoln), before and during the Civil War, the thought among the enslavers was that Black people would be a problem if “freed” and that it would result in deleterious effects to the union. They determined that rather than emancipating, we should be sent back to the continent (as some were when sent to Liberia until it was found to be financial and logistically problematic). Which says TWO things. Their mindset is that if they can't have us under their boot, they feel we are of absolutely no use to them... AND... that their DREAM is a country without us in it (Black people who are now BORN in America). And so, unable (or unwilling) to ship us back as they originally wanted, their next solution was to either re-enslave us (which they actually did through convict leasing and share cropping—share cropping being particularly heinous and demonic, because before our people were forced to work with no compensation under slavery, were now placed in a position where we were PAYING to be enslaved), marginalize and ultimately annihilate us.

And that is why I write! I'm trying to do my part in helping our people get control of our narrative so that we stop buying into EVERYONE ELSE'S conveniently destructive narrative about our people!

I think it might be helpful to check out my blog entries: BAD Programming! and MORE Bad Programming! Viruses, Malware and Spyware where I break down what has happened to the minds of our people and why we behave the way we do.

Like I said, statements like this trigger me in a way that runs DEEP, because it is SO disingenuous and self-serving for those who push that narrative! I want DEEP well thought out analysis about our people and our condition by people like Dr. Amos N. Wilson, Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Malcolm X, Neely Fuller Jr. and others, who have ACTUAL love, honor, respect and concern for our people, and are honest about the challenges and don't sugar coat the problems... but ALWAYS putting them within the CONTEXT of a system that was DESIGNED to do harm and destruction to our people. Moreover, they offer SOLUTIONS for the problems,

that is why I will listen to THEM and not surface level shade tree philosophers who have ZERO genuine love or concern for our people and who ONLY speak to the EFFECTS and not the CAUSE, and further offer NO solutions! And saying “Ya'll need to do better isn't a solution.” That's like me looking at someone who has just been shot and saying, “You need to get that bullet out of you.” WHILE their still being shot and looking at them like they are wrong because they won't stop bleeding! And then going on my merry way as if stating that OBVIOUS FACT is somehow helpful.

It is not.

I hasten to add, that ALL this is being said at the same time the person who SHOT them and is continuing to shoot them is standing right there, but ZERO FOCUS or blame is being placed upon THEM.

Little messages like the one that provoked this writing only serve as a vehicle for “big upping” their people (whatever the race) as the ones who supposedly “have their shit together”, and joining the pile one that makes a career out of dumping on Black people. EVEN if the speaker is Black or “FBA” or “ADOS” or what have you. The result is STILL the same. “Everyone else has their shit together, and Black people just can't seem to do it.” (Underlying message: because there is something SO inherently wrong with us).

I will NEVER be part of that pile on!

One of the first steps in our liberation is to stop accepting the narratives of others who hate us and internalizing them. We need to REJECT them out of hand, no matter HOW on point they may SOUND. What is the underlying reason for the statement or message? Are they given context? Are there any ACTUAL solutions being offered?

If not, then what is being said is only propaganda. It would do well for our people to know that.



**AUGUST IS THE MONTH! As part of the Keepin' it a BUCK HORROR/SUSPENCE Series!**



And don't forget to check out the original Keepin' It a BUCK Series featuring tales of Theoretical Ebon Fiction!

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# READING and WRITING in the DARK

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## CERTIFIED HUMAN

Earlier in this edition I wrote about AI and what I think are some disconcerting aspects of it. Along with that I wrote about what I hope sounded like some encouraging aspects of it. All of that said though, when it comes to AI (and especially books that are written using it), I personally don't have a problem with it (not YET anyway), given this single caveat: If something was created 100 percent using AI, then I want to KNOW it. Just tell me up front. Who knows? I (or some audiences) might take a chance on it just out of curiosity if nothing else.

If food is GMO, if something is not organic, if something isn't really what I'm being led to believe it is, then I want to know it. For that reason, at least with my personal work, I'm designing a stamp that assures the reader or looker (if it is my visual art) that it was done by a human being. If some significant part of it was done by AI (like the cover of the upcoming book Danica and Larkin: Through a Glass Darkly), I will disclose what was done with AI and of what percentage. That part will be a

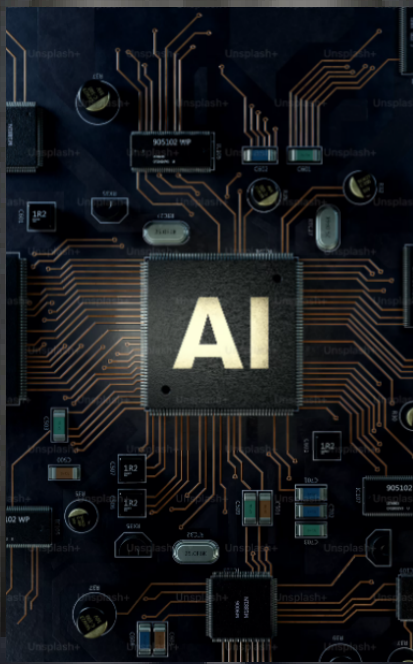
guesstimation, but I will do my best with it.

I have spoken to a few people about this and watched videos and heard discussions people are having about AI, and it appears that many people feel the way I do. They don't mind if something was done by AI, but they just want to know about it and not be thinking something was created by a human being when it wasn't. As a realist, I know that everyone isn't going to go as far as I am and start labeling work as human or not. For some it is actually in their interest to keep that pesky little fact hidden. But for me, this is the route I'm taking, and I feel pretty darn good about it!

So how about you?

How do you feel about AI and books written completely in AI like ChatGPT? Does the thought of it bother you or make you feel uncomfortable, or do you not really care as long as it's entertaining?

Let me know by dropping an email to: [rawitdcomments@iyapoyapa.com](mailto:rawitdcomments@iyapoyapa.com)



## Could YOU survive?!

Five years ago, a cataclysm now known as THE COLLAPSE occurred. Dimensions merged with horrific results. It is now common to see creatures of myth, legend, and nightmare along with once long extinct animals populating the landscape. Carl, LaTanya and Lester, embark on a quest to find a lost book that can't change the madness of the new normal but may assist them and others in the now nearly impossible task of: SURVIVING the WORST! Enter a world of action, adventure, science and horror on Kindle vella!

Click on the Kindle vella link below!



Be sure to take some time to visit my website at:

<https://www.iyapoyapa.com> - or just click the image to the right!

There are a LOT of things to see and interact with! There are also a couple special surprises hidden in the site. They aren't marked, but if you take a little time to search for them, you'll defiantly be pleasantly surprised!



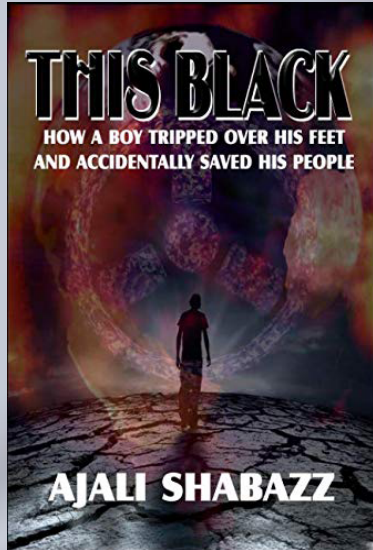
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Books by:

## AJALI SHABAZZ



Author of: *This Black - This Black NATION* and *Furnace of Affliction!*  
**The Reading and Writing in the DARK Podcast Interview!**

You don't want to miss this discussion with this new POWERFUL voice in  
PRO BLACK FICTION in the genre of Theoretical Ebon Fiction, and Non Fiction!

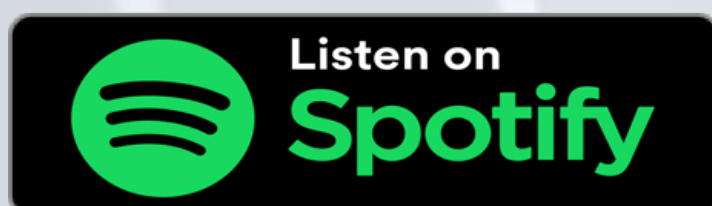
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<https://www.spreaker.com/show/a-conversation-with-author-ajali-shabazz>



Did you know there is also a **READING and WRITING in the DARK PODCAST?!**  
Well there IS and you can tune in to it and listen just by clicking the block to the right.

You can also hear the **READING and WRITING in the DARK** podcast on:



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READING and WRITING in the

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## Alright, enough about ME!

Below are AWESOME stories on the KINDLE VELLA platform by some authors I know!

Just click the cover art to be transported to their stories!

And remember, the first THREE episodes are FREE to read!



### I DeClaire Love

Angela Riley

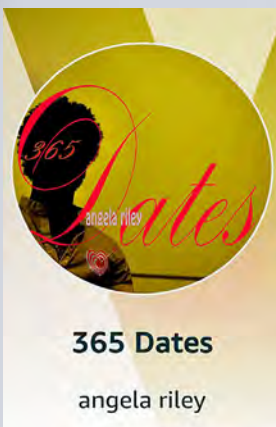
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love? Is simple, sane, “old-fashioned” love out of style? CAN LOVE SET US FREE? \*\*\* New Episodes Weekly!



### The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

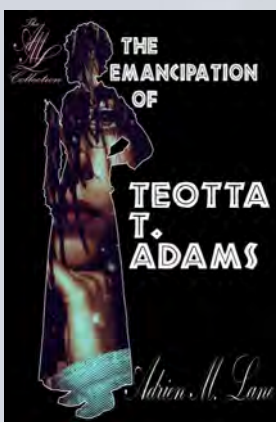
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands up for and works to support and encourage the natural flow of Black Love.



### 365 Dates

Angela Riley

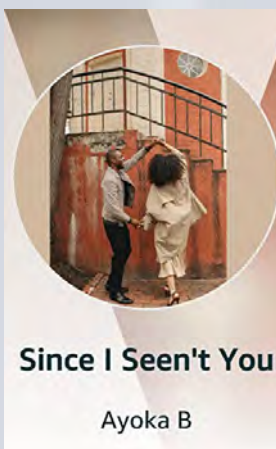
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to vague--I want to date.--to make anything happen, I decided to pursue a HUGE goal of going on 365 dates. Not 3, 5, or 6 dates but three HUNDRED and SIXTY-FIVE dates. So...LET'S GO!



### The Emancipation of Teotta T. Adams

Adrien M. Lane

Teotta T. Adams has it all, big house, nice car, fine clothes, and a private chef, one of the best in the world, and a successful husband. Yes, Teotta has everything. Everything except her FREEDOM! She spends her days in the lap of luxury, but inside she knows something's wrong. Her 'husband' is just this side of a stranger, and worse, Teotta knows even less about herself. When she finally discovers why, and the incredible truth behind it, she will long for the bliss of her lost ignorance.



### Since I Seen't You

Ayoka B.

She and David met when they were 18. After a rough start, they build a friendship that would span decades: marriages, children, love and heartache. When they lose touch, she thought that she would never see him again, but she was wrong. Can men and women truly be just friends? Can their friendship withstand what life has in store?



**The Match**

Ayoka B.

Have you ever changed someone's life? I mean in a life and death sort of way. I opened a letter that I almost threw out, thinking it was junk mail; it said that I was a possible bone marrow match for someone! I couldn't even remember being tested. The letter asked me to contact them if I was still a willing donor... what would you do?



**A'DICK'tion The Back Story**

MADM Precious

From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.

**ALSO AVAILABLE on AMAZON and OTHER PLATFORMS!**

**Below are stories and books by some authors I know!**

**Just click the cover art to purchase their book.**

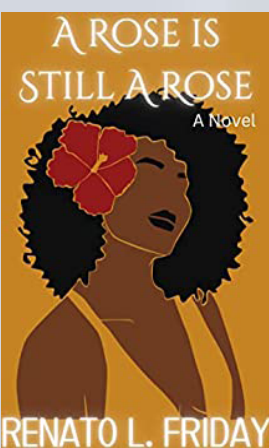


**Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)**

angela riley

**SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...**

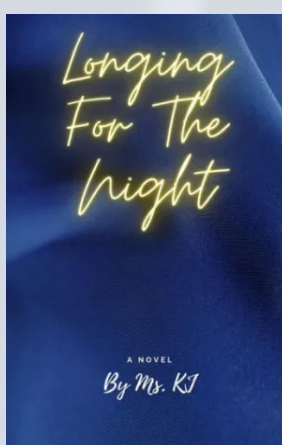
With a new book released each month, this "Graphic Nonfiction" series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as "Following the Happy" or "Plan & Reflect" and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You'll have a beautiful time meditating and reflecting on the monthly theme as you AFFIRM Self Love.



**A Rose is Still a Rose**

Renato L. Friday

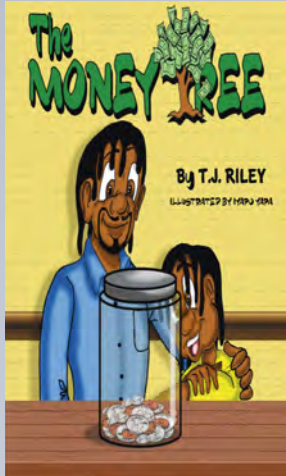
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship, she met a man named Falcon, who ironically turns out to be her new boss. They quickly go from acquaintances to lovers, which opens up a fire pit of drama. Then comes Landon, a self-made millionaire, who is very humble about his accomplishments. He shows her all the things she was lacking while with David, and ultimately proposes. Naturally, Rose is scared to fall for Landon and accept his proposal due to David's lies and Falcon's toxic choices, but she takes a chance and allows Landon to love her the way she needs. Will her love for him forsake the feelings she's still harboring for Falcon, or will she give into temptation?



**Longing for the Night**

Ms. KJ

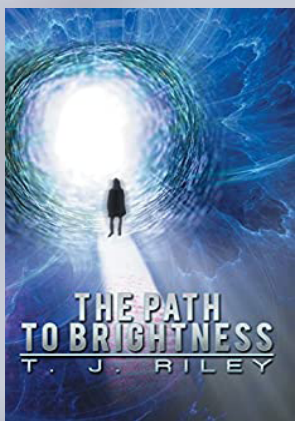
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



**The Money Tree**

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

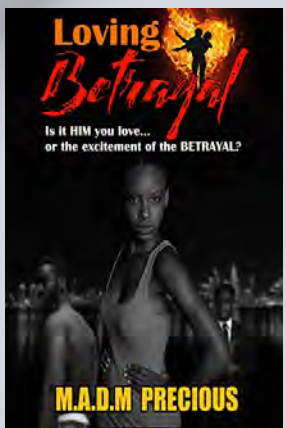
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



**THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS**

T.J. Riley

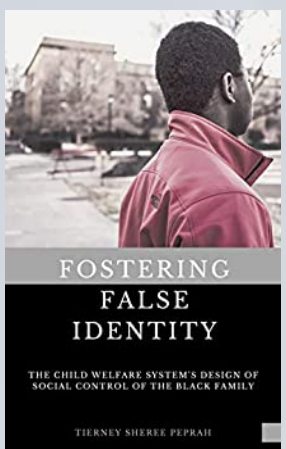
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima's journey as she tries to convince others of the astounding esoteric knowledge she has brought back from beyond the veil. However, there are some that wish to stop her from sharing an ancient secret. A secret that will change life on earth, forever.



**LOVING BETRAYAL**

MADM Precious

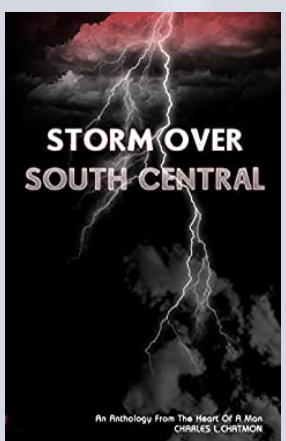
When Michelle met Michael, she thought that she found the love of her life. She was young and coming out of a bad marriage. A single parent of two children, she was scared, broke and had no self esteem. Michael seemed perfect, except for one little problem...



**Fostering False Identity: The Child Welfare System's Design of Social Control of the Black Family**

Tierney Peprah

THE ORGANISM OF RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES CRAFTS VARIOUS SYSTEMS MEANT TO ACHIEVE ONE OVERARCHING PURPOSE, that is to ensure that peoples and groups designated for an inferior existence pose little to no threat to the social structure of wealth and privilege that is propped up on their backs. These systems are allowed to exist, oftentimes unchallenged, by propagating dishonest descriptions of why these systems exist. Many people are without the proper means to challenge these systems, camouflaged as being charitable or in the public interest, for their unjust outcomes. In Fostering False Identity, the American child welfare system is explored as such a system. While the child welfare system is portrayed as a moral arbitrator in the abuse and neglect of children, in actuality this system was formulated for the specific purpose of regulating disenfranchised populations by removing children from those communities to assimilate them into White society. Thus assimilated, they are believed to pose minimal threat to the social order. Fostering False Identity will explore this phenomenon through a lens of Black liberation and self-determination of African families who are consistently victimized by this system.



**Storm Over South Central**

Charles L. Chatmon

The Storm has been unleashed, which means it's time to share what's inside the much anticipated anthology by author Charles L. Chatmon.

Chatmon, a refreshing voice in the world of modern poetry and author of *The Depths of My Soul* & *The Voices of South Central* returns with engaging short stories and thought provoking poems.

Read *Storm over South Central* and discover the thoughts he writes about in this volume filled with verses and tales of despair, stories of hope. It will also reveal a lot about American society – its strengths, its flaws and its people. This is a literary journey you will enjoy taking.

**And there will be more authors to come, who are working to  
 TAKE CONTROL OF OUR NARRATIVE!**

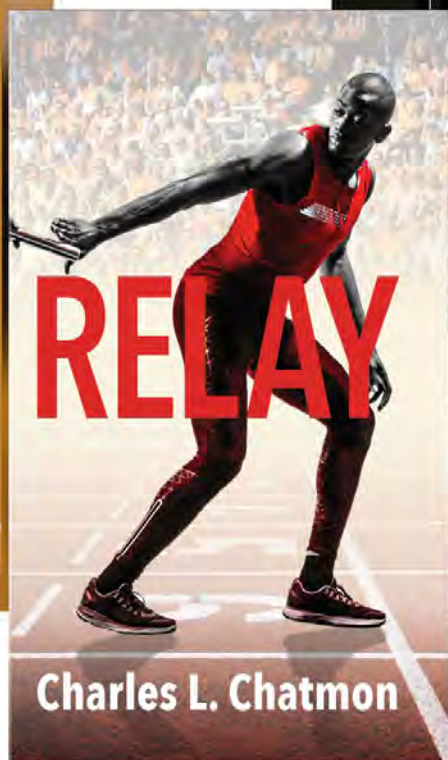
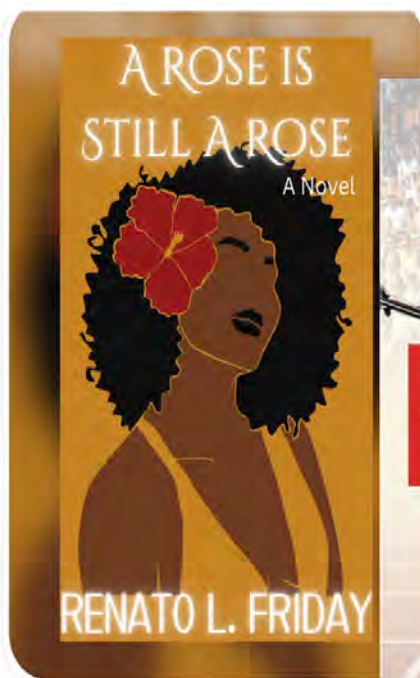
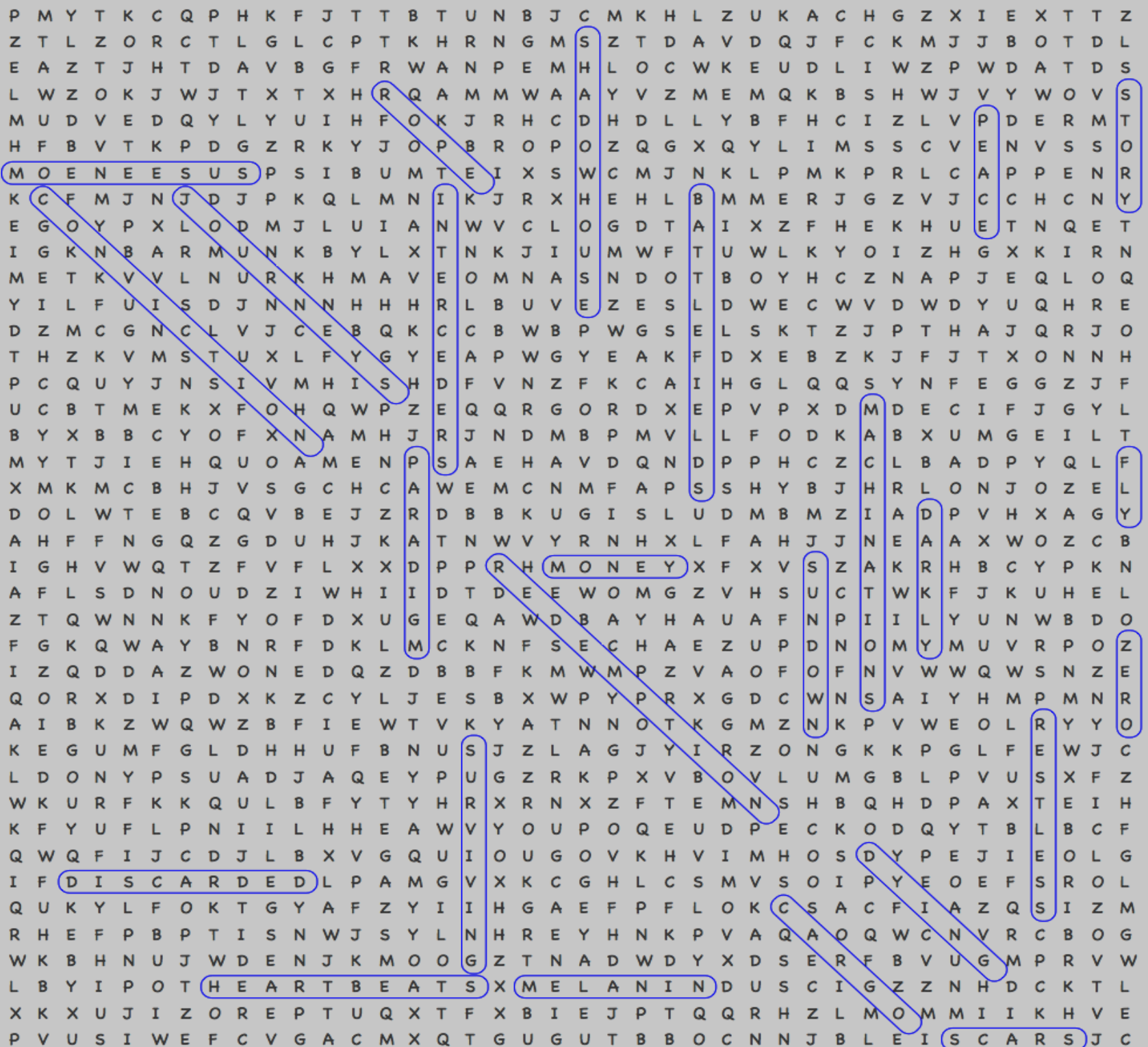
THANK YOU for subscribing to the newsletter, I genuinely appreciate it! Be sure and spread the word about my work by telling others about my website, books, podcasts and such at: <https://www.iyapoyapa.com>

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