



JOY TO THE WORLD!

Last night, at the stroke of midnight, 2023 ended and 2024 began! Many -- like me -- are wondering where did the time go? Thankfully, I count amongst my many blessings the diversity of my family and friends who have complemented and continue to complement my life. In spite of time passing quickly, time spent with family and friends is always time well spent and savored.

NOTE: *It is my opinion*, those who choose communities of diversity tend to be more joyful, always reveling because of infinite reasons and opportunities to do so. While, those with closed minds who choose to live in closed communities and not pursue opportunities of interaction with and learning from those unlike themselves may not revel as much. Therefore, *it is my opinion*, closed minded individuals tend not to live truly joy-filled lives.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I am not one to make new year resolutions, however, I decided to make a few for 2024!

Choosing to find more joy in life, **I resolve** to move forward in my



writing with words of positivity. **I resolve** to resist the temptation of negativity in my thoughts and actions. **I resolve** to surround myself with positive people. **I resolve** to make decisions based on my own research and not on the

research and thoughts of others. **I resolve**, in this year of 70 revolutions around the sun, to be a better person!

GET COMFORTABLE!



Now, would be an excellent time to grab your favorite beverage for reading because there is a lot to be read starting with my opportunity to attend five virtual sessions of wisdom and experience from professional publishers, editors, agents, writers, etc. Unfortunately, I was not amongst the first 1000 registrants who received a writer's toolkit, but I continued to tune in to the sessions of *Women & Words*, an avant-garde publishing collaboration formulated between Penguin Random House and Storehouse to amplify the stories of underrepresented women.

Each session, September 20 through December 6, was moderated by Porscha Burke, Director, DEI Strategy, Senior Editor, Random House. The wealth of information provided by each session's diverse panel was invaluable in spite of one panelist stating during session #1, self-publishing may be the best space for children's book. A children's book is what got me started on this road. In 2009, I wanted to publish *I AM HERE BECAUSE ...*, but the illustrator factor was cost prohibitive so I started down the path of poetry books.

In spite of the comment, I decided to revisit my children's book manuscript; it is a historical fiction of my family's Jefferson-Hemings-like relationship. In our family's story, there was NO "Martha," only the enslaver and the enslaved who

lived as husband and wife in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, before, during and after the Civil War.

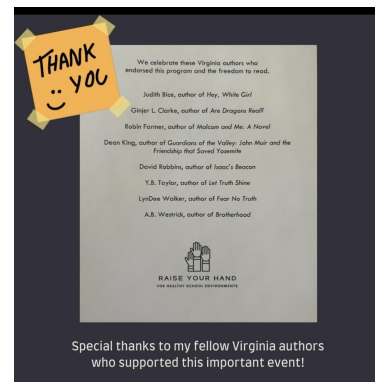
Copious notes were taken during each session and I hope to one day get my manuscript in front of the likes of Sydnee Monday and Bunmi Ishola.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Last quarter ended with the 50-year celebration of UVA's Kappa Rho Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. *The charter celebration weekend was also a celebration of my birthday! 70, I coming for you!* My Charter Line sisters and I were honored the entire weekend. The absence of our three sisters who transitioned to Omega Omega Chapter was felt -- *R.I.P. Vanessa Darden Boone (1953-2015), Carmen Regina Johnson (1953-2023), and Patricia Nash White (1952-2013).*



Since I have not mastered being in two places at one time, I could not attend a book event held in Richmond that same weekend. Much gratitude to my author/friend, Judith Bice, for posting a THANK YOU on social media acknowledging **"Raise Your Hand for Healthy School Environments"** to which I donated bookmarks for their resource table.



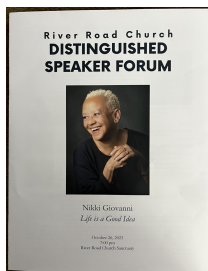
THEN, THIS HAPPENED ...

October included an abundance of opportunities. There was an opportunity to listen, another to share as well as an opportunity to speak!

OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN: Nikki Giovanni kicked off the Distinguished Speaker Forum at River Road Church, Baptist. I am guessing about 200 were

present to hear my soror speak her truths. I would have loved to have been a student in her classroom. Her delivery is such that one becomes engaged in what she is saying and cannot come away unaffected. She signed **The Library**, which I had purchased for my grand baby and I presented her a signed copy of **LET TRUTH SHINE!** as well as a couple of photos -- (1) circa 1975, Nikki Giovanni with Kappa Rho Chapter at UVA; and, (2) circa 2010, Nikki and me at 50th National Convention. I'll be adding one of the forum photographs to my special album of me with "notable" Delta sorors.

BTW, poetry and Delta are not our only commonality; we share first names, but she spells hers "Yolande" and I spell mine "Yolanda." Who knew?



OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE: Cathy Hughes of Urban One, Inc. was in Richmond to promote the RICHMOND GRAND RESORT referendum. Long story short, one of the venues where she spoke was IEC, 00 Broad Street. The owner, Dionne Hughes, no relations to Cathy Hughes, but one of my younger cousins, welcomed Ms. Hughes to come and speak at her shop. I was not able to attend, but I provided a signed copy of **LET TRUTH SHINE!** for the gift bag. Ms. Hughes, impressed by Dionne, returned to IEC the following Saturday where I got to meet her and identify myself as the author to which she stated, "I love your book!" **"Woohoo!"**



Y.B., Cathy Hughes and Dionne's mom, Karen Hughes Butler; my mom and her dad were siblings

OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK: I was honored to be one of several alumni asked to speak at an Appreciation Luncheon for "Conscientious Disrupter / Silent Conductor" Dr. Linwood Jacobs. It was wonderful to be able to display our appreciation to Linwood for all he did overtly and covertly to benefit black students at the University of Virginia. Dr. Linwood Jacobs enjoyed the accolades. The bonus of our being able to present him with his "flowers" while he could smell and enjoy them was a moment to be treasured. Of course, I

gifted him a signed copy of **LET TRUTH SHINE!** because he encouraged all of us to shine!

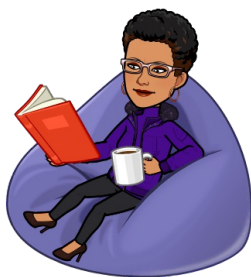
Sadly, Dr. Jacobs transitioned December 26, 2023; the program to honor him was at the end of October.



WHAT'S BETTER THAN ...

What's better than seeing your literary child amongst other Virginia Craft Artist on display in the Gift Shop of VMFA (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)? Glad you asked! When the recently restocked inventory is already down to six copies, ***IT IS WAY BETTER THAN ANYTHING!***

UPDATE: Number of copies were down to four two-days before Christmas! Time to restock!

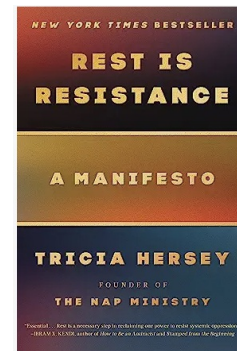


WHAT THIS AUTHOR IS READING!

My personal library is growing, both physically and digitally. Feel free to send recommendations because writers read!

TRUTH: As a child and young adult, I was a voracious reader. At some point, I strayed. But, I have found my way back and I am enjoying reading again. Reading has become my cocoon of comfort, relaxation, stimulation and growth of knowledge! *Reading, in spite of what some wish to believe, IS fundamental!*

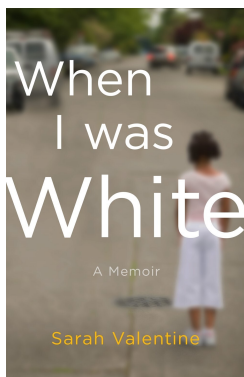
Fourth quarter, I RESTED and I READ! Allow me to clarify ... third quarter's assessment of **REST IS RESISTANCE** by Tricia Hersey still stands, but as I got further into my reading, I found myself understanding the concept which the author was presenting. In my third quarter newsletter, I mentioned the redundancy of her words. Well, guess what? She states at the conclusion of the book, "*Repetition is a powerful concept for deprogramming and I hope you stay with your head on a pillow and in the stars imagining new worlds.*" **REST IS RESISTANCE** prompted ...



“WALKING IN FREEDOM” ©2023 (a work in progress)

*Rising each day
Checking my calendar
For what may lay ahead
Will it be ...
A day scheduled by me
Or, a day scheduled by others?
Will the day be a day of rest
Or, a day of grind?
A day of choice
Or, a day of told?
A day controlled by me
Or, a day dictated by others?
When left to me
I choose rest
I choose choice
I choose me
Walking in freedom ...
I choose time for self
Time for reflection
Time for imagination
Walking in freedom ...
I choose gifts
Tangible and intangible
Time being tangible
Dreaming not so
Walking in freedom ...
I choose ...
Gifts unavailable to my ancestors
Gifts of rest*

Gifts of time
Gifts of opportunity to dream
Treasured gifts,
If found
Prized gifts
When unwrapped
I wish to walk in freedom
To immerse myself
In choices of my own making
I wish to walk in freedom
Reclaiming my time from others
I wish to walk in freedom
Reclaiming my time from social media
Not, succumbing to manipulation
And dying a spiritual death



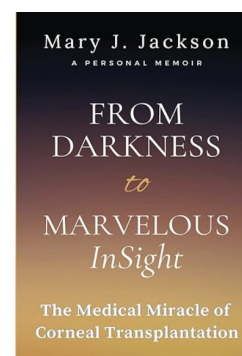
I started reading **WHEN I WAS WHITE** by Sarah Valentine at the close of the third quarter. Obviously, from the title, the author discovered her true ethnicity, but the path to her discovery was convoluted.

Being black my entire life, I cannot imagine balancing diverse worlds of being mixed race or biracial. But, when someone is actually raised thinking they are white while all around them, i.e., their family, know the truth, it has to be a test of one's being and resilience upon discovering the

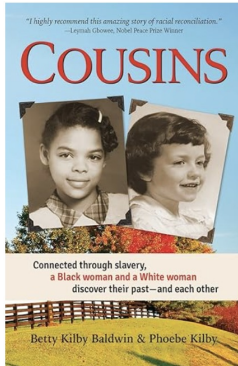
truth.

This was an interesting read which raised lots of questions for the author as she journeyed a road of discovery of her true self.

TRANSPARENCY: FROM DARKNESS to MARVELOUS InSight by Mary J. Jackson is a book I may not have picked up to read. However, its author is one who has been known to me for many, many years. I knew she had experienced corneal transplantation, but I was unaware of her backstory and the adversities she faced. "Momma J," as I also call her, has been such a supporter of my writing, how could I not reciprocate and be supportive of hers? As Mary Jackson states, *"You don't know how my feet feel if you have not walked in my shoes."*



THANK YOU "Momma J" for bearing your truth.
I admire the strength it took for you to share your story.



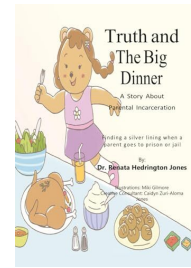
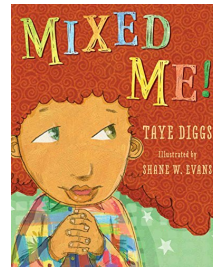
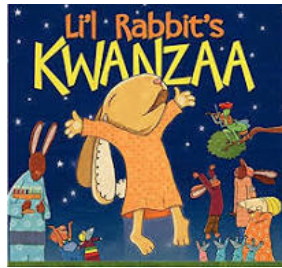
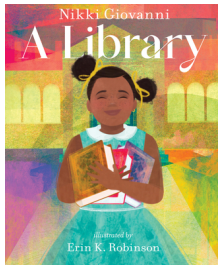
COUSINS, by Betty Kilby Baldwin and Phoebe Kilby, is a tale of cousins, one black and one white or as they refer to themselves, African American and European American. The cousins discovered one another through happenstance. I had high expectations of disclosures of detailed familial interactions, both historical and present day. I was disappointed. However, promotion of *Coming To The Table*, a group formed to work together to create a just and truthful society acknowledging and seeking to heal from the racial wounds of the past, and group exercises utilized by CTTT, received a lot of ink.

I was again disappointed when their joint speaking engagement scheduled for the end of November at UR's Jepson Alumni Center was cancelled. I was looking forward to their talk, which I assumed would have included discussions of discoveries and ongoing building of familial relations.

At first, I could not remember why I added **ALL NOT FIT TO BREED** by Eddie Brooks to my Kindle library, but *lightbulb*, Eddie was a high school classmate whom I did not know, but encountered at our 50th class reunion last year. This book is a historical fiction, which is, at present, my favorite genre. It is the story of two lives defined and altered by chauvinism and bigotry. The book is raw and gritty and captures the subtle and not so subtle behaviors and thoughts of the era. It takes place in Charlottesville and has several references to my alma mater, UVA. To borrow from Eddie ... *Ninety years ago, a small group of doctors, lawyers and judges sided against a young woman who had been raped. They were white supremacists of a different sort, Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200 (1927).* Eddie does a great job of creating characters with which the reader gets emotionally involved.



BOOKS FOR MY GRAND!



A Library by Nikki Giovanni is the book mentioned earlier and the one she signed to Robin. It is still at our house because my daughter does not want two-year old hands destroying it. (ha, ha!)

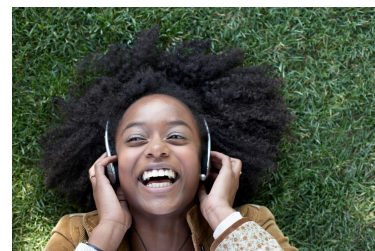
While in the VMFA Gift Shop surreptitiously checking the inventory of **LET TRUTH SHINE!** I perused the inventory of children's books. Being close to the holiday season, **Li'l Rabbit's Kwanzaa** caught my eye; it was their last copy. Imagine my surprise when I recognized the name of the illustrator as someone I crossed paths with years ago. We connected and he sent an illustrated postcard for Robin, which was placed in the book. Shane also suggested my getting Taye Diggs' **Mixed Me**, also illustrated by him. Now, getting Taye Diggs' signature for the book would really be a coup! *Hint, hint ... Shane!*

Truth and The Big Dinner by my sister-soror, Dr. Renata Hedrington-Jones, is a tale about finding a silver lining when a parent has been imprisoned, because not everyone is blessed with a perfect life.

CHUCKLE ANYONE?

I keep receiving emails from various book Marketing Reps. I usually **DELETE** because I know they want to sell a service. I decided to follow up one email with a call. It was as suspected but I got something out of the call.

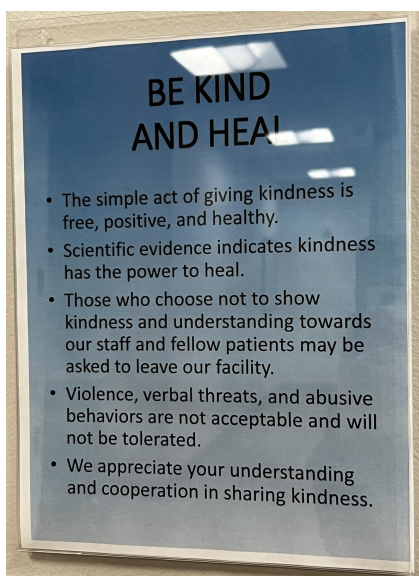
Long story short, I was asked who designed my **website** because it looks professional, has all the needed elements, and is well done! With all the modesty I could possibly muster -- *LOL* -- I told them I did! I was asked about my book covers. Again, that would be me with collaboration on a couple. How about my social media presence, radio interviews, newsletters, etc. -- check, check and check! Evidently, the one thing I was lacking was a presence on YouTube which they could provide for \$\$\$\$\$. After telling the young lady my age and her registering shock, I told her I would keep our conversation in mind, thanked her and hung up.



Those who know me, know how "scroogie" I can be! I immediately went to

CANVA and designed a short video and posted to [YouTube](#). Going forward, I shall "TRY" to put forth more effort in promoting my literary children via YouTube.

UPDATE: I decided to put forth the effort a couple of days before the end of 2023 and posted to [YouTube](#) again! Perhaps, I will strong arm myself to post to YouTube once a month



Posted in waiting room of Oncology Radiology (Sarah Cannon Cancer Institute)

LASTLY, ...

I wish to use this space for a very important PSA. I wish to remind everyone of the importance of D-T-R! No, not *digital transfer rate*, nor social media's *define the relationship* and certainly not the medical reference to *deep tendon reflex*. D-T-R, in this instance, is of my own creation and pertains to **(D)etection** (early), **(T)reatment** (immediate), and **(R)esolve** (strength of will).

Thankfully, I look good in PINK because last quarter -- not by choice -- I joined a group of considerable size which is comprised primarily of women. I am not seeking attention!

However, I am seeking everyone be proactive with their and their love ones health because even those of us who consider themselves to be superbeings can receive unsettling medical news.

As I travel down this path -- new to me -- I wish to say **THANK YOU** to my growing "pink ribbon" family for words of encouragement based on their personal experiences. I also wish to **THANK ALL** who check on me, offer prayers, assistance, and have blessed me with tokens of love.

Y'all, I'm good until someone tells me otherwise!

I'm still feisty as hell!

And, I'm still handling my business!

AGATHA CANCRO ©2023 (a work in progress)

My phone rings!

An interruption of my day!

*Dare I answer now, ...
Or, listen later?
I answer!
Then, spiral into depths of ...
Disbelief
Dismay, and
Depression*

*Wondering ... Why me?
Thinking ... Why not me?
Realizing ...
Resilience is my friend
Strength is not an enemy
And overcoming is my Holy Grail*

*I surrender and accept
A medical diagnosis
Unexpected,
From a physician
Simply doing his job
His pronouncement
Of this intrusive neoplasm
Will not bring closure
To a life well-lived
And, ...
A life to be lived*

*I wallow
For a moment!
Then, take action
For now, I am
One more flower
In a bouquet of pink*

*Blush, hot, shocking and rose
Bubblegum and Barbie
Because age is not a factor
Bountiful bouquets of pink
Plentiful of pistils
With far fewer stamens in count
Fragile in appearance,
But strong in number
Empathetically tied together*

*By words no one wants to hear
But, words which will be heard by many
Until a cure has been found!*

*I wallowed
For a moment!
But, remembered ...
Resilience is my friend
Strength is not an enemy
And overcoming is my Holy Grail!*

I call her Agatha Cancro

(Footnote: cancro is 'cancer' in Italian)

***If I recently added you as a subscriber, it was because I felt there may be something of interest to you in this issue.
Feel free to UNSUBSCRIBE at anytime.***

Past newsletters can be downloaded from my [website](#).

**Thank you for your support! And remember, SHARING is CARING!
Y.B. Taylor, Author**



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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