



JOY will be a Book of Poetry!

Gestation for literary child #9 is in progress with a tentative delivery third quarter 2024! For now, she is **JOY!** but the title is subject to change! Poems in **JOY!** will reflect a kinder and gentler tone, but will still address truth.

And, This Happened ...

Last quarter, an email was received announcing an inaugural offering of five virtual sessions of Women & Words presented by **Penguin Random House and Storehouse in a Box**. The idea was to provide publishing opportunities to underrepresented women. The sessions included panelists of authors, editors, agents, etc. At the end, during an added session, the 10,000 virtual attendees were encouraged to submit manuscripts. I blew the dust off of my children's book manuscript, which I wrote in 2008 and submitted it along with more than 300 others who submitted. **Surprise!** My submission landed in the top 10%. I was invited, and more importantly went, to New York for a one-on-one meeting, i.e., speed dating, with top industry literary agents. Those who did not speed date participated in round-table discussions.



I did it!



Speed Dating participants



Me & Tamira Chapman, CEO, Storehouse



SWAG & books from the "Book Bar"

Stay tuned as I put into practice the bits of information and suggestions I was provided. I may finally be on the way to getting my children's book published. *Fingers crossed!*

Long Arm of the Internet

Before the middle of January, I received an IG message purportedly from a high school senior in Idaho. *I was suspect!* She provided the name of her high school with a request to connect with me for her government class assignment. Still suspect, I called the school, spoke with an assistant principal and received confirmation that such an assignment did exist.

Next question, how did she come upon me? **Answer: the Internet!!!** She found a 2019 article about the "Growing Up Civil Rights Richmond" exhibit at the University of Richmond. **It wasn't a SCAM!**

We connected and scheduled a virtual interview. The interview went well; I hope "Sam" got an **A**. This may not seem that extraordinary to some, but a student reaching out for an interview with someone across the country based on a 2019 article they found on the internet was pretty impressive to me.

Black History Celebration

I was honored to have been invited to the Chesterfield Food Bank Outreach Center to share my poetry during their Black History Celebration! The poems I selected to share were YES, WE CAN! from my first literary child and MIDDLE PASSAGE and SHALLOW ROOTS, which will both be in **JOY!** The diverse audience was very receptive to my



readings stating they loved how I presented history through my poetry.

The main speaker for the event, Bernadette Spencer, presented some very interesting Little Known Black Facts. One fact in particular which I had never heard was of the story of **Sarah Rector**, the "Richest Colored Girl in the World."

Photographs compliments of Kathy Pratt, Chesterfield Food Bank Outreach Center, Food Drive and Event Coordinator. Thank you!



A Little Bit Country

Recently, Queen Bey introduced two country songs reflective of her Texas roots and controversy abounded. *Why?* In 2015, I birthed **KEEPING IT REAL! A Book of Poetry and No Excuses**. One of the 37 poems contained within was ...

I'M A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY!

An admission of liking country
Grievous to some who are black
Failing to recognize similarities
Between country, blues, and rap

All three convey tales of relationships
All three convey tales of life
With lyrics interchangeable

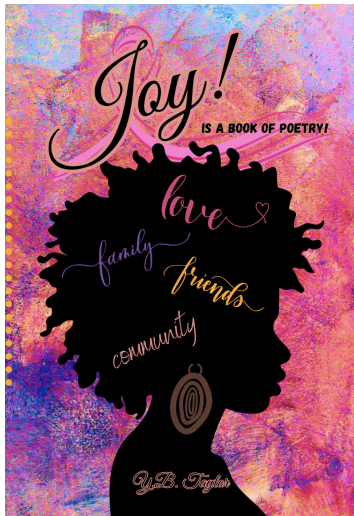
Genres are imprecise

Getting past the drawl and twang
To appreciate the words
Because country like blues and rap
Conveys on its own terms

So, I hitch up my boot-cut denims
And pull on my high-stepping shoes
I Wobble and Achy-Breaky
Club and Country Two-Step, too

You see, I'm a little bit country

'Cause Man! *I Feel Like a Woman!*
Since the *Boys 'Round Here are Something to Talk About*
I won't be *Cathy's Clown* since *I Can't Make You Love Me*
And, *I'll Be Okay* cause *I'm Better Than You Left Me*
I'll sing *My Hallelujah Song Over and Over*
While *Takin' Off This Pain* on *Islands in the Stream*



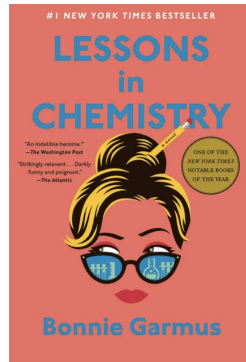
This or ...?

Long before the completion of a book, I am thinking about its cover. I have been playing around with cover ideas and decided to get readers involved.

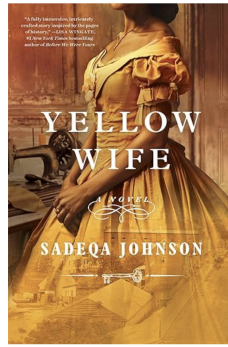
This, for now, is what I am contemplating. Does it capture your attention **OR** should I ditch it and start all over from Square One? I am open to suggestions **OR**, if you fancy yourself an illustrator and want to submit a cover, feel free to do so! If your suggestions prompt me to make substantial

changes or if your cover is chosen, you will receive cover credit **and** a complimentary signed copy when **JOY** is published!

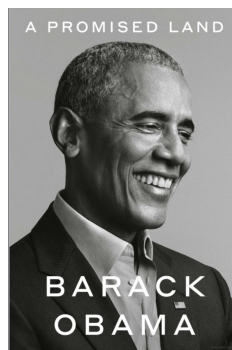
What This Author Is Reading



LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY was an impulse buy after seeing something on tv. I am glad I added it to my Kindle library. 99.9% of the books I select are about or by African Americans. *This book is not!* BUT, it was still a great read! The female protagonist defies the expected behaviors of women of the 1950s. She's a scientist, an unwed mother, and does not play. She does not buy into male dominance *b@!!sh@t* much to the chagrin of most of the men she encounters. I mentioned the book to younger daughter and she informed me of a made-for-tv series of the book. I am not big on tv shows and movies made from books BUT I sought out and watched the episodes -- *with skepticism*. Surprisingly, the tv version was as good, possibly better than the book because of the inclusion of African American characters in pivotal and professional roles as well as the inclusion of fighting for civil rights which was a pivotal moment in America's history.



Always a day late and dollar short! I finally decided to read *YELLOW WIFE*, a historical fiction based on Mary Lumpkin, the mulatto slave "wife" of Robert Lumpkin, the cruel owner of the jail in Richmond, Virginia, known as "the Devil's half-acre!" This book made me cringe. The graphic and vivid telling of brutal, callous, animalistic treatment of enslaved was more than I could tolerate a few pages at a time. Choices made for one's own survival and survival of those loved were unfathomable.



After *YELLOW WIFE*, I desired to read something less gut-wrenching while on holiday in St. Kitts-Nevis. After a perusal of my Kindle library, I decided upon *A PROMISED LAND* by Barack Obama; another hefty book already read by many other than myself.

Life has been a little bit busy! Reading of *A PROMISED LAND* has not be completed in time for inclusion of my thoughts in this newsletter.

For those recently added to my mailing list -- by me -- you were added because I felt there may be something of interest in this particular issue. Feel free to **UNSUBSCRIBE** at anytime.

*Recently added subscribers and those wishing to read and/or **SHARE** past issues can download from my [website](#).*

Believe it or not, you are at the end of this newsletter. I know the past few have been VERY lengthy. I made a concerted effort to keep this one brief.

As always, feel free to share! Encourage others to subscribe because *sharing is caring!*

**Thank you for your support and encouragement,
Y.B. Taylor, Author**



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