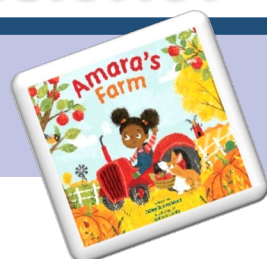
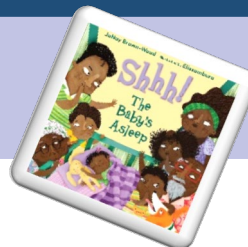
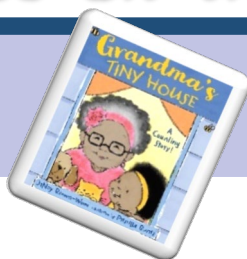
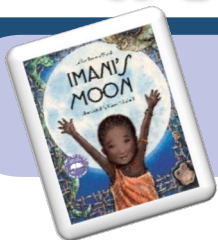


JaNay Brown-Wood, PhD

CHILDREN'S AUTHOR & EDUCATOR

Words on the World: A Newsletter



Happy. happy March!

Some Words on *Goals* and *Hope*

For You and Those You Love

By JaNay Brown-Wood

Here.

I have something for you.
Something I would like to share.
It stays warm, even when there's cold.
It stays bright, even when there's darkness.
It resounds, even when there's silence.
But you have to hold it,
with your heart.

Or else

it might burn out.

Here.

And if we hold it together
if we share it
if we give some of it to others.
It will grow.
It will grow.
It will grow.

Take some and keep some and share some
with anyone in need.

Here.

© JaNay Brown-Wood

With spring on the horizon, and still only a few months into 2021, I wanted to share some thoughts about goals—setting guideposts to our dreams and wants. I also wanted to speak on hope. I think it's always important to hold on to hope—even when situations feel difficult. Thus, I started this March newsletter with a poem about hope.

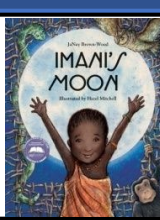
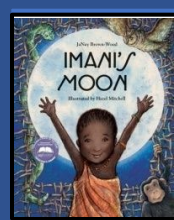
I have found that during times when things feel out of my control, setting goals helps me to keep my focus. Setting goals provides me some direction and something to strive for. They give me hope that I'll get there—wherever *there* is. I'll share a bit of what I did on my road to publishing children's books and how goals played a role.

Setting Small Goals

While I always enjoyed writing (when I was in elementary school, my 6th grade teacher actually predicted that I'd be a "best-selling author" in the future), it wasn't until after I finished my undergraduate degree that I decided to wholeheartedly pursue publishing. At that point, I didn't know of anyone who had published books for children, and I felt lost. How do I do it? Who do I ask? This led me setting small goals to move myself toward my ultimate goal of getting a book published.

What did my goals look like at that point? First, I wanted to learn more about the craft of writing. I took some classes including fiction, poetry, and other genres (creative non-fiction, etc.). I felt that in order to really get a good grasp on how to write a good story, I needed to learn about what *makes* a good story. From there, I got a hold of additional books that focused specifically on writing for children. I set a goal that I would read a certain number of craft books or materials each month to improve my own writing skills.

Did you see *The Late Show* shoutout by Stephen Colbert?



On March 2nd, Stephen Colbert mentioned me as an author of color to read instead of Dr. Seuss, and listed *Imani's Moon* as a good book to select. Specifically, he said:

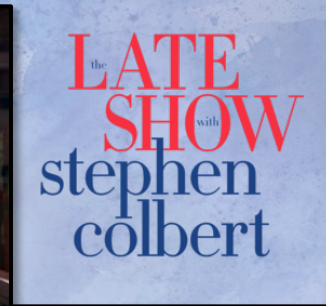
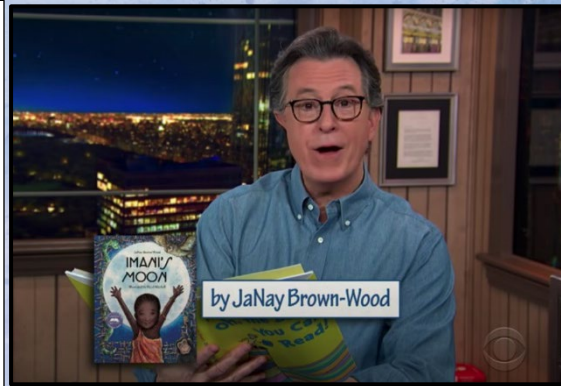
“There's lots of new stories you might find quite good / Like *Imani's Moon* by JaNay Brown-Wood.”

He then goes on to list three other authors, including Misty Copeland and Matthew A. Cherry as authors to read!

Check out the full clip here:

<https://youtu.be/P4qN-478bYw?t=658>

What a special moment that was for me! It was another example of how setting goals can truly lead to accomplishing your wildest dreams!



Once I felt that my craft was improving, both my fiction and poetry, I decided to become a member of an organization that helped push my writing even farther. It is called the [Society for Children Book Writers and Illustrators \(SCBWI\)](#). This organization helped me align my goals toward publication even more. For example, each year, the Northern/Central California region of SCBWI hosts a conference where editors and agents attend and present. Thus, attending this conference motivated me to write so that I had something to submit. Also, through SCBWI, I was able to meet other writers and form a critique group where I submitted my work to them and critiqued their work. This also helped me to keep working to ensure I had something to share with them each time we met. Ultimately, these resources kept me writing, and I set goals to submit my work consistently.

On top of that, I set goals regarding reading as many picture books as I could. Each time I visited a bookstore, I made myself read at least 10 books so I could study what makes a quality (or not-so-quality) picture book! By setting these small goals, little-by-little, it led to refining my craft and finally to my larger goal: my first publication, *Imani's Moon*.

What About YOUR Goals?

So, what is something you've wanted to accomplish? What are goals you have thought about but may have never obtained? Whether it is writing a book, running a marathon, or just getting healthy, to me, setting goals always feels like an excellent start!

I encourage you to set small goals that are easy to determine whether you've reached them or not. Also, **write them down** and check them periodically so you can monitor your own progress! Now I must ask YOU:

- What big thing do you want to accomplish?
- How can you break it down into smaller goals and work toward that larger one, bit by bit?
- WHAT is stopping you? How can you overcome that?

So HERE, take some hope, set those goals, and accomplish your dreams, whatever they may be!

Is writing a book for children one of your goals?

Here are a few tips based on my experience:

1. Consider joining the [Society for Children Book Writers and Illustrators \(SCBWI\)](#).
2. Take some writing classes (especially *fiction* classes if you want to write picture books, middle grades, young adult; *poetry* if you want to write in rhyme, etc.). Community colleges are GREAT for this!
3. If you are interested in writing picture books, check out this book: [A Hands on Guide to Story Creation and Publication](#) by Ann Whitford Paul.
4. READ, READ, READ as many children's books as you can, in the genre you want to write.
5. Consider joining a critique group. This is a group of other writers who meet regularly and share their work with each other, offering revision suggestions.

Where have I been?

Check out these interviews featuring JaNay...

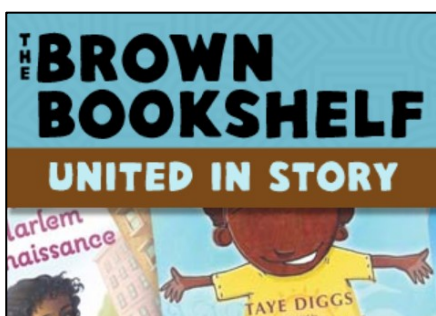
Cynsations

[Cynsation's Awesome Authors Interview](#)

WATCH. CONNECT. READ.

Exploring Children's Literature through Interviews and Book Trailers

[Shhh! The Baby's Asleep Cover Reveal Interview with Mr. Schu](#)



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SACRAMENTO STATE

[Sacramento State Interview](#)

Book #4 Coming September 1, 2021



Written by **JaNay Brown-Wood**, Illustrated by Samara Hardy
Peachtree Publishing Company
ISBN-10 : 1682631656
ISBN-13 : 978-1682631652

A young girl searches for pumpkins on her farm in this joyful celebration of cool-weather fruits and vegetables. From the new *Where in the Garden?* series. Amara is hosting a potluck for friends on her farm, and her snacks won't be complete without pumpkins. She's searched and searched, but she's grown so many plants that she needs help finding them. What do we know about pumpkins? They're large, round, and orange--and, wait a minute, is that a pumpkin? No, that's an apple. Where, oh, where could those pumpkins be?

Click
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Website: www.janaybrownwood.com



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