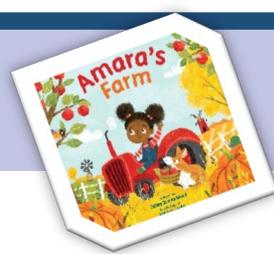
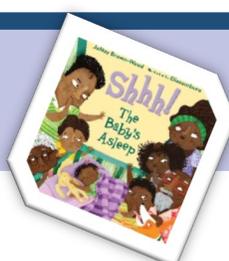
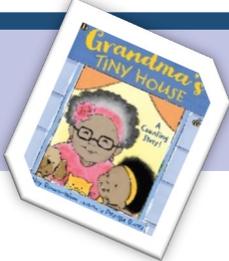
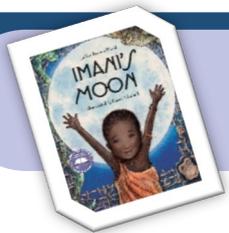


JaNay Brown-Wood, PhD

CHILDREN'S AUTHOR & EDUCATOR

Words on the World: A Newsletter



Saying "Hey!" to May

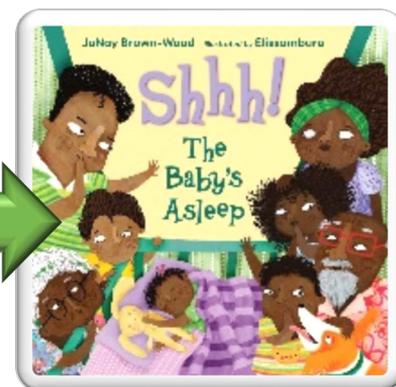
Some Words on *Observation, Inspiration, and Capturing the Moment*

As the semester is winding down and I am preparing for the summer, I find myself thinking about plans I have and some of the things I am hoping to accomplish. Generally, I use the summer to do some academic writing and creative writing, too. This got me thinking about how a number of my passions overlap, and how skills in one passion can actually come in handy in others. Specifically, I am thinking about how observation can give rise to inspiration, and how recording helps to capture the moments that can be used to create, plan, research, and write!

Observation. In order to be a strong researcher, refined observation skills are key. Researchers pay attention to phenomena within the world and use those observations to search for answers and hypothesis verification. But observation is also essential within the classroom. College professors use observation to check in on adult students; body language, questions, explanations, completed assignments, etc. help us know whether adult learners are engaged and understanding our material. Observation is also needed in classrooms for young children as educators pay close attention to children's interests, milestones, and progress in order to craft emergent curriculum and engaging learning environments and activities.

While it is clear how observation supports teaching and research, I find that observation plays just as big of a role when it comes to writing stories and poetry for children. The same observation skills and keen attention to the world around you can be fodder for inspiration of stories to share.

When I am out and about in the world and around others, I observe happenings for inspiration. I also think about life experiences and how I can creatively use what I notice to inform a story. A great example of this includes my inspiration for SHHH! THE BABY'S ASLEEP. Reflecting on the actions I observed of myself and my husband when it came to getting my daughter, Vivian, to sleep when she was an infant, I wrote a story of keeping everyone quiet so the baby can sleep.



Thus, the merging of observation and life experiences can lead to sparking stories.

Inspiration. Now, when I am out in nature or around animals, and when I am paying attention to the sights and sounds all around me, inspiration often finds me, too—connecting to Earth frees my creativity. I have a number of poems I have written about insects, whales, flowers, and animals that emerged when immersing myself in nature. I'll use my poem "The Staring



A Feature on A Conversation with Julie Bliven



As we gear up for the release of **SHHH! THE BABY'S ASLEEP** I had the pleasure of speaking with Julie Bliven of Charlesbridge Publishing. Julie and I have worked together on many books including *IMAN'S MOON*, *GRANDMA'S TINY HOUSE*, and *SHHH! THE BABY'S ASLEEP* as well as many upcoming books as well.

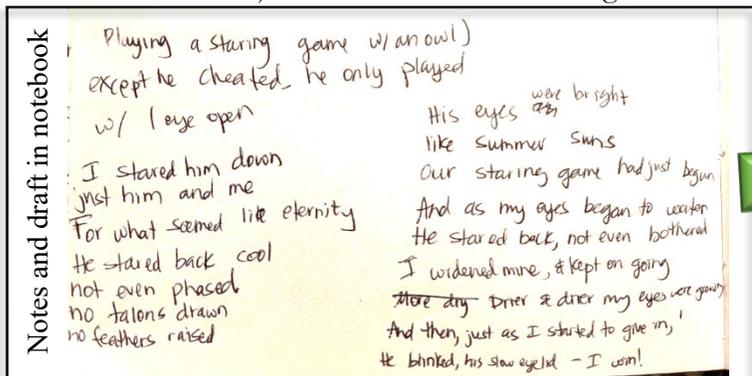
Watch our conversation as we discuss diversity, writing, and the many hats I wear.

Here is the link here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRQziDeHBOI>

Game” as an example. I remember when I visited a zoo in Folsom, CA, inspiration hit as I stood outside and peered into the eyes of a caged owl. I stared at it as it stared back and poem ensued. Luckily, I had a means to capture this inspiration before it evaporated from my memory.

Capturing the Moment. Research requires capturing the moment through assessment, interview, or whichever methodology you need to conduct your study. Teaching requires capturing the moment through running record, assessment notations, or student notes. Capturing the moment is essential when creative writing inspiration hits, too. For years, I carried a notebook with me so I could jot down ideas that bounced in my head. Here is a snapshot of the notes/draft I jotted down for “The Staring Game”:



The physical notebook was great—I have since switched to an electronic notebook that allows me to capture inspiration on my phone and share it as a document to further develop my stories, poems, characters into finished manuscripts.

As for you, I want you to think about observations you might engage in, moments you might capture, and inspirations you might use to inform your classroom, research, creative writing, or any endeavor. Keeping your eyes and ears open is of utmost importance, but so is keeping an open mind and an open heart: it is during those times where the most authentic and meaningful ideas emerge and give you a chance to create learning experiences or stories that make lasting impacts on those around you.



Also, since you never know when your observation skills might prompt inspiration, it's important to always have something nearby to capture your ideas!

Where will JaNay be?

Check out these events I'll be participating in...

Virtual UnPeeled: The Ultimate Children's Event

Saturday, June 12, 2021: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (PDT)



Elizabeth Mitchell
singer/songwriter



Simi Stone
singer/songwriter



Karen Katz
author
The Colors of Us



Basho Mosko
singer/songwriter



JaNay Brown-Wood
author/educator
Imani's Moon



Caspar Babypants
singer/songwriter

I will be a part of the free event **BANANAS VIRTUAL UNPEELED** including a host of fun and engaging authors and entertainers.

RSVP and learn more here:

<https://givebutter.com/virtual-unpeeled>

I will be giving a weeklong workshop about writing children's literature through the fantastic Fishtrap Summer Writer's Workshop. It is going to be an amazing experience!

There is still space to register today!

Register and learn more here:

<https://fishtrap.org/brown-wood/>

JaNay Brown-Wood – Children's Literature

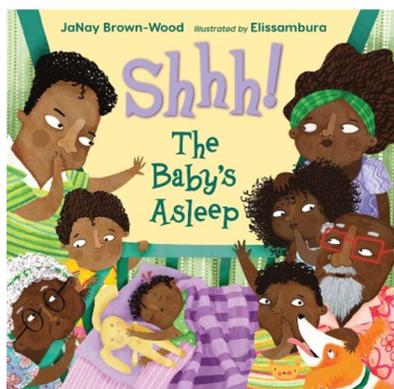


Words to Build a Better World: Contemplating and Crafting Authentic Stories for Children

In this workshop we will talk about writing for children and review some basics of picture books and novels as well as elements of a story that move a young reader through a strong narrative. Additionally, we will look critically at what makes a good children's book, especially when considering the importance of capturing authentic and diverse voices. Finally, we will analyze our own stories to see where we can begin revising and strengthening our manuscripts. Attendees are asked to bring up to five pages of a work-in-progress and ready for revision or 1-2 fresh book ideas to start on. This workshop is geared at helping authors better understand children's books as a whole, consider the importance of authentic diversity, and begin crafting and revising their work to really make their manuscripts shine!

Register Now

Book #3 Coming **NEXT MONTH**: June 15, 2021



Written by **JaNay Brown-Wood**, Illustrated by Elissambura
Charlesbridge Publishing Inc
ISBN-10: 1580895220
ISBN-13: 978-1580895224

Baby is finally asleep. But everyone is much too noisy! Can Mom, Daddy, Grammy, Pop Pop, Shae, Dante, Rover the dog, and even the neighbor keep quiet? Of course Baby is eventually awakened. But one savvy little narrator knows just the way to make his baby sister fall back asleep: by reading a good book to her, of course. A hilarious cast of characters will keep readers laughing throughout this amusing celebration of early literacy and intergenerational family relationships.

Click
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