

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

NEWSLETTER

THIS ISSUE:

SCI-FI on the FLY!

Micro Sci-Fi Stories

BASED ON THEORETICAL EBON FICTION



iYAPO yAPA

WHAT IS SCI-FI on the FLY?!
iYAPO yAPA dives into the fast
paced world of

MICRO SCI-FI!

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And

Why we should call it
THEORETICAL EBON FICTION Page 2
(and not AFROFUTURISM?)

**News and Information about Completed and Up-
coming Projects and MORE!**



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NEWSLETTER

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READING and WRITING in the DARK Newsletter
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Writer/Editor/Layout

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WOW! You're BACK! GOOD! 'Cause so am I!

These are some EXCITING times!

My debut novel (I have to admit, I don't like calling it that because there is a weird stigma attached to the term - you know, new authors and such, even though I've been writing for decades) MELANIN: A NOVEL will be officially released at the end of this month (August 31, 2022), and I couldn't be happier or more excited!

Writing a novel is the kind of thing a person, if they have that inclination, tends to talk about, but seldom does. After having written a couple, I can see why. Writing a novel that is interesting and engaging is more than a notion. A lot of things come into play, not the least of which is creating environments, or situations with which other people can relate, thus drawing them into the story. One of the rules of thumb I have heard author after author give is that when writing a novel (short story, or anything else), write things that excite you. Because if you aren't excited about what you write, how can you expect someone else to be?! That's something that seems pretty obvious, but I believe many writers forget that and only focus on putting words on paper for the sake of it.

That said, MELANIN definitely fits within the parameters of, "This is something I'd be very engaged reading!" The premise is strong and it is a complex story without being too convoluted. I have to admit that as I was going through the final edit, there were parts were I felt like saying, "I wrote this?!" just because I thought it was so good and layered! I'm fairly certain I'm going to write a sequel to MELANIN, but that is back in the wings for right now. Presently I'm concentrating on completing the second installment in the Paradigm VOID series. I'm more than halfway through it and am presently very happy with the stories.

I'm also working on a project that I plan to publish on the Kindle Vella platform. It is an episodic series that I'm hoping will capture the imagination of our people and prompt them to read the first three installments, then keep begging for more!



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

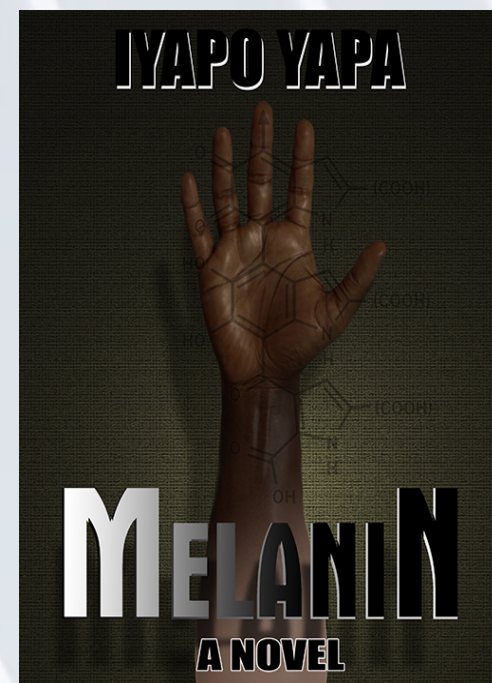
"It was exciting! I stayed up a few nights wanting to see what was coming!"
- Ayoka

You can Pre-Order

MELANIN: A NOVEL

by clicking the cover to the right
or

by clicking on the logo of one of the retailers below.



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Why We Should Call It Theoretical Ebon Fiction

- This article is taken directly from my website at: <https://www.iyapoyapa.com> -

I have always enjoyed Sci-Fi and what is now called “speculative fiction”, but missing from the genre was any real representation of our people within those landscapes. Certainly, there are the Octavia Butlers, Stephen Barnes and Tananarive Dues out there, as well as writers like Brandon Massey (mostly horror and suspense), and now, new on the scene is Ajali Shabazz (This Black and This Black NATION), T.J. Riley (The Path to Brightness), and others. But still, our people have been woefully underrepresented in the genre. When we **are** present, we’re listed in the category of AfroFuturism—a moniker I have rejected. Why? Because just as with the much celebrated, fictional “Wakanda” of Black Panther—the term was coined by a white man (Mark Dery) Now, how, exactly did **THAT** happen?!. It is odd and disturbing to me that every other race seems to have the ability to control their own narrative and terms pertaining to them, but when **BLACK** people seek to do so, it’s seen as some kind of a problem. That said, part of being Unapologetically Black - or **PRO Black** - means that we seek our own terms and control of our own narrative, future and direction. Thus, I use the term “**THEORETICAL EBON FICTION**” to describe the body of my work that falls into that speculative fiction by Black authors category.

Making the case for **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION!**

Yesterday I was in the chat room of a live stream on a You-Tube channel that falls under the umbrella of **BLACK POWER MEDIA**. It was an **EXCELLENT** discussion! In the chat room, I kept pushing for the term **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION**. I received some lighthearted ribbing and push back from those who were on screen (it was all in fun), but as I thought about it, I decided to reexamine the term. By straight definition we have:

- **THEORETICAL** (A term in an academic discipline, functioning as a proposal to see a phenomenon in a certain way. A proposed way of thinking about potentially related events.)
- **EBON** (LITERARY: Dark Brown or Black; Ebony.)
- **FICTION** (Fiction is any creative work, chiefly any narrative work, portraying individuals, events, or places in ways that are imaginary or inconsistent with history, fact, or plausibility. In a narrow sense, “fiction” refers to written narratives in prose – often limited to novels, novellas, and short stories.)

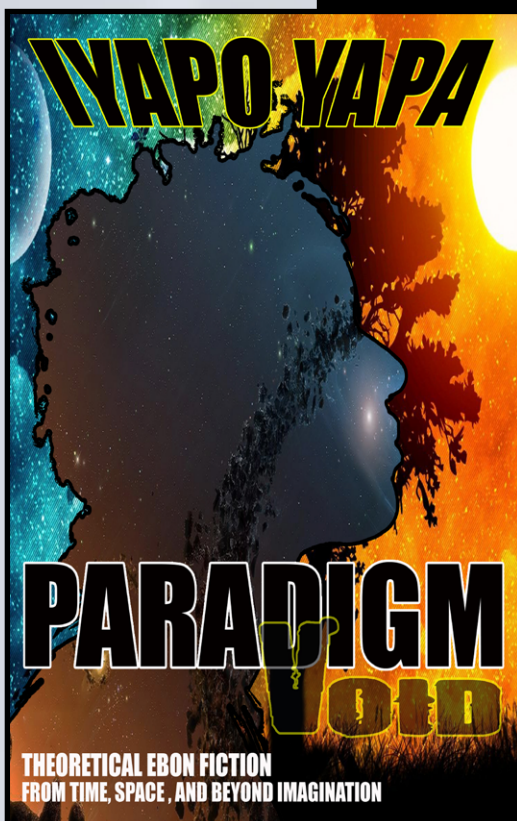
As far as I’m concerned that is a **PERFECT** definition of what those of our people who write speculative fiction, write.

There was a little good natured talk about the fact that it doesn’t roll off the tongue, (what? And “Black Speculative Fiction” - coined by a white woman - **DOES?!**), But come on now ... no one says Kentucky Fried Chicken anymore, they say **KFC**. No one says “The Government Employees Insurance Company” they say **GEICO**. “Micro Computer Software”? Nah... **MICROSOFT**. One more ... “Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd”, yep, you figured it out: **IKEA**. Eventually no one will say **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION**, they’ll just call it “TEF or T.E.F.” - Like few people say Science Fiction, we now say Sci-Fi.

But no matter **WHAT** it’s called, it will be **OURS**, made by **US** by someone who feels Love, Honor and Respect for Black us!



So, yes, so I’m prepared to fight for the term - at least until I or someone **BLACK (not biracial - not a POC - not Black “identified” - but B-L-A-C-K)** comes up with something better and more fitting. I would ask that those with me start using it, or it’s acronym and explaining **WHY** we should use it and not the terms given to us by those who seek to be in our spaces.



If you’re needing to get your **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION** 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 T.E.F., 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**?

PARADIGM VOID is presently in the editorial stages and will soon be available at your favorite book seller!

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MY QUESTION IS:

In America at least, since the institution of chattle slavery -
when have **Black people**, NOT lived in a **DYSTOPIA**?!

Something has been happening to our people for a VERY long time, and many of us notice it and have spoken about it. Namely the phenomenon of thing not becoming a “thing” until it is somehow adopted by white people, or happening to white people. Black women worked and either supplemented, or outright took care of families at the same time forEVER, but after the first white woman put in a job application they come up with “WORKING WOMAN MAGAZINE”! Same for the so called “opioid CRISIS”. It was a problem because it affected the white community, when our communities have been flooded with drugs (intentionally) for decades. The phenomenon of the “Angry White Male” due to being treated like they are a throw away by big corporations and a government that used to grant them unlimited privilege, but now have curtailed some of it - but just some - that’s enough to piss them off and send them on shooting rampages.

I said all that to say this:

For a couple minutes *The Hunger Games* was all the rage. Before that we had movies like *The Matrix*, even before that there was *Brave New World*, and Orwell’s *1984*, we can go all the way back to *METROPOLIS* (Not the one Superman flies over), the 1927 movie by from the novel and screen play written by Thea von Harbou a, and directed by a pioneer German film maker Fritz Lang.

What all these movies and stories have in common is that they in one way or another deal with dystopian societies.

What is a **Dystopia**?

A dystopia is a hypothetical or imaginary society, often found in science fiction and fantasy literature. They are characterized by elements that are opposite to those associated with utopia (utopias are places of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions). A dystopia is, therefore, a place in which humanity is dehumanized and people live fearful lives. Furthermore, governing these societies are totalitarian regimes and often are faced with severe environmental catastrophes. Common elements of dystopias may vary from environmental to political and social issues to politics, religion, psychology, spirituality, or technology that may become present in the future.

This definition was written using the Oxford English Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, The Free Online Dictionary, and Dictionary.com.

What are some characteristics of a Dystopian Society?

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens (the people) of the society.
- Information , independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshiped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- The people have a fear of the outside world.
- The people live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- The people conform to uniform expectations & and individual dissent is bad.
- The society is and illusion of a perfect Utopian world.

Any of this sound familiar?

With those definitions in mind, it begs the question:

When have Black people in the United States ever **NOT** lived in a Dystopian Society?!

Jim Crow laws originated in the post-Civil War era as early as 1865 and lasted (overtly), until 1968. Concurrently being in place during the release of *METROPOLIS*, *Brave New World* (1932), and *1984* (1949).

Hypothetical or imaginary society? For Black people in the United States - and in some other places on the globe - not so much. Dystopia has been our lives and our experience since our ancestors were brought to the United States in chains. It is a staggering realization when one takes a moment to recognize that in the United States no Black person from the first enslaved Afrikan, to TODAY, knows what it feels like to NOT live under oppression or within a “System of White Supremacy”. We live it as a state of being. Whether we buck against it or not, whether we are conscious of it or not doesn’t matter. We, typically, are not conscious of the air around us or gravity, but we still interact with it every moment of every day and are subject to its effects.

The argument that I’m making is that, in the United States at least, the entire experience of our people has been that of living in a dystopia.

I think that as Black writers and creatives, we must keep that in mind when approaching our work. The same thing that is horrifying for another race of people may not bother us in the least, and vice versa. If you think of it in that way, a book or movie like *Roots*, *12 Years a Slave* *Birth of a Nation* and so on, are actually **DYSTOPIAN** works. If you want to take it a bit further, it could be argued that they could fall squarely within the parameters of HORROR or PSYCHOLOGICAL TERROR stories. (Think of the *Hostel* or *SAW* series - no monsters there. People are kidnapped tortured, terrorized, abused and murdered by soulless, heartless captors). Is that not these stories? Is that not **OUR** story ever since coming in contact with Europeans?

“Dystopia has been our lives and our experience since our ancestors were brought to the United States in chains.”

There has been much talk about the TWO Americas. There has always indeed been two Americas, and the America for Black people who are the descendants of enslaved Afrikans has ALWAYS been a DYSTOPIA.

China is the most surveilled country on the planet. Guess who comes in second (thought admittedly a far distant second)? The UNITED STATES, WOW! How did you guess?!

Of the U.S. population, the Black people who we are repeatedly informed make up only 13% or so, are overwhelmingly the most surveilled people in the country.

<https://cybernews.com/editorial/this-is-the-most-heavily-surveilled-city-in-the-us-50-cctv-cameras-per-1000-citizens/>

There are cameras in Black urban areas, cameras in stores, or hands on, live store “detectives” or what have you, who just happen to be in EVERY isle WE happen to be in. So called “law enforcement” spends their days over policing the Black population, sometimes to the point of just following us around hoping against hope they either catch us committing some kind of infraction (which is usually nothing of the sort), or following our cars and running our plates while we’re just driving down the street minding out business (as happened to me several times).

All of this said, I have definitely concluded that:

For Black people, the United States has **always** been a dystopia.

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FLASH FICTION (Micro Fiction) is a thing!

What IS Flash Fiction?

Flash fiction is a genre of fiction, defined as a very short story. While there is no set word count that separates flash fiction from more traditional short stories, flash fiction stories can be as short as a few words (while short stories typically run for several pages). Flash fiction is also known as sudden fiction, short-short stories, micro-fiction, or micro-stories.

The term “THEORETICAL EBON FICTION” soon WILL be! I’m confident in that.

What happens when Flash Fiction meets Science Fiction based on Theoretical Ebon Fiction?!

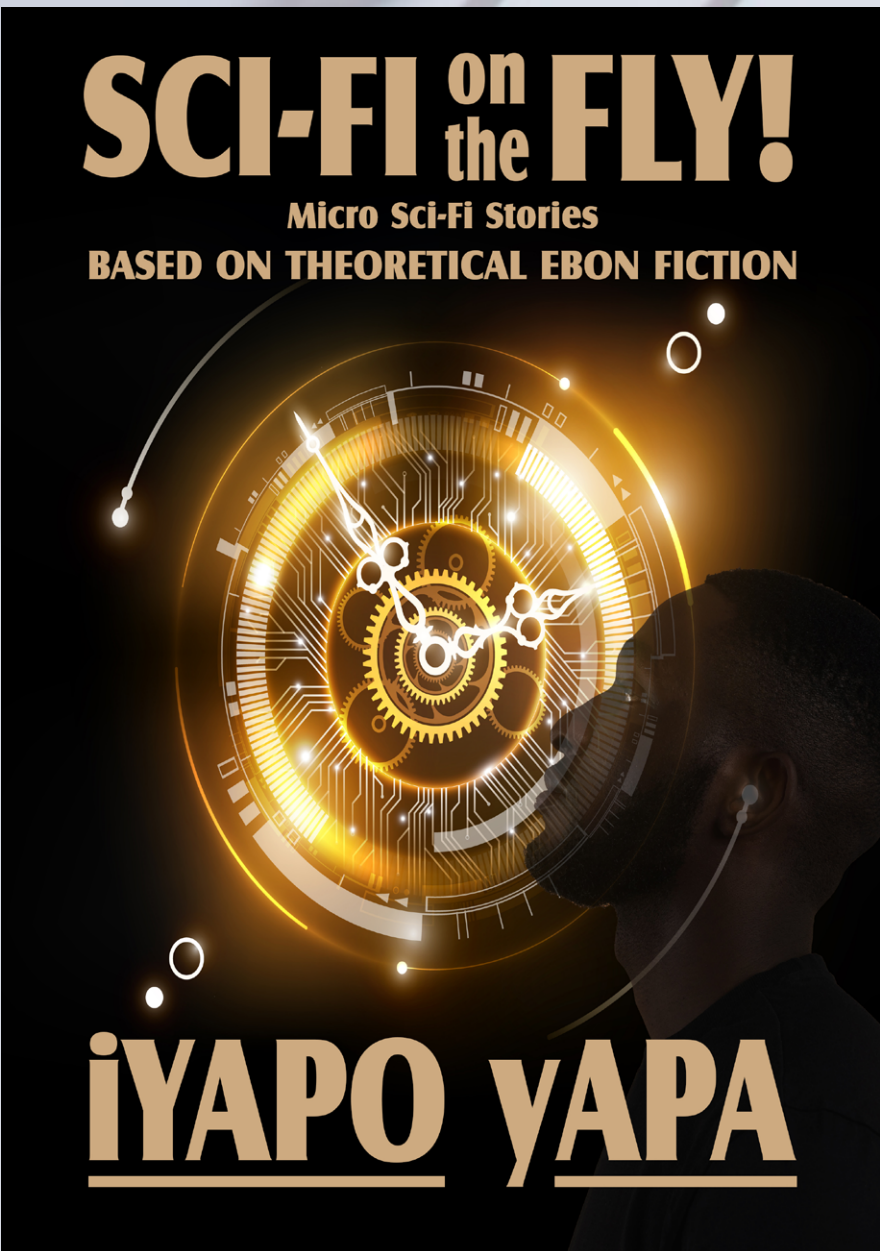
You get SCI-FI on the FLY!

Admittedly, some of the stories in the book I’m presently writing *SCI-FI on the FLY!* Are not just tales of what one would traditionally think of when they hear the term “Sci-Fi”, but they always border on the bizarre, thought provoking and in some cases, even the macabre (much in the way the Original Twilight Zone did).

I started writing a compilation of Micro Sci-Fi for the same reason I started reading Flash, or “Micro Fiction”. I like to read, but sometimes I just want to ‘get in, and get out’. If I’m in bed reading and I’m getting sleepy, I want to read something that has a beginning, middle and end sometimes, but will only take me a few minutes. Sometimes when I’m writing, I want to construct a story within those same parameters.

SCI-FI on the FLY! is the result of that.

MasterClass, M. C. staff. (2021, September 7). Writing 101: What is flash fiction? learn how to write flash fiction in 7 Steps - 2022. MasterClass. Retrieved July 20, 2022, from <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/writing-101-what-is-flash-fiction-learn-how-to-write-flash-fiction-in-7-steps>



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 definitely be pleasantly surprised!



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Controlling Our Narrative. HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Well ... I guess I'm gonna be the guy who, when people see coming they say, "Aw no! Here comes that Iyapo with that 'taking control of our own narrative' stuff!" And then take off running in the other direction!

Truth to tell, that view of me wouldn't be too far from wrong. Controlling our narrative has become my mantra and is fast becoming my crusade! Or people have ALWAYS (from the time we encountered Europeans and were brought to different countries in chains), been a people whose narrative was controlled by EVERYONE other than US - and predominantly by the people of European descent who hate us and made it their mission to defame and harm our people at every opportunity.

Why is it so important to control our narrative?

Think of a narrative in the way you think of advertising. If you had a company you wanted to really take off, the very FIRST thing you would do is ask your COMPETITOR, (the competitor that wants to either take over and/or run YOUR company out of business), to take charge of your day to day operations and especially take full control of your ADVERTISING and how the public views your company.

Just reading that, you likely said, "Iyapo, are you out of your MIND?! Only someone INSANE would do that! Or at the very LEAST someone who doesn't care that their company crashes and burns!"

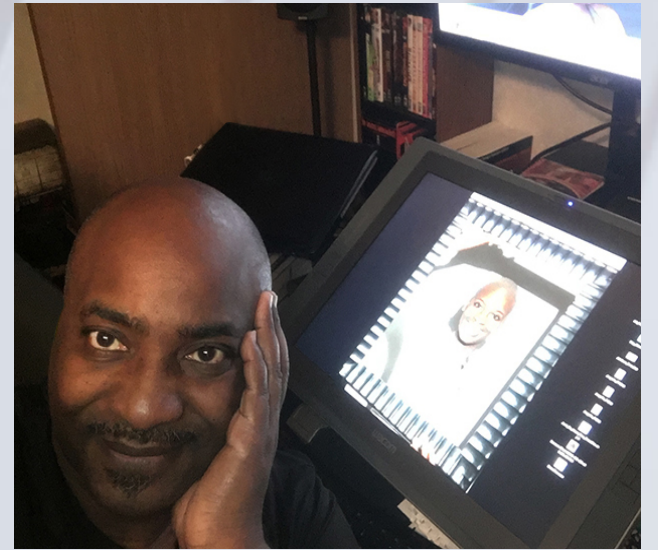
ONE HUNDRED PERCENT CORRECT!

But yet, on a daily basis, we either hand over that power, don't push back against it, or directly buy into it either directly or indirectly. The result is a people who globally, have a distorted image of themselves, who see themselves as the greatest evil the world has ever seen, or not worth paying attention to at best.

One of the ways we can push back is for those of us who LOVE and RESPECT our people, to CREATE for our people as NEVER BEFORE! FLOOD our media with BLACK LOVING, BLACK HONORING and BLACK RESPECTING materials that uplift our people and that separate us from any and all European standards. Whether we create or not, we should all CONSUME things made by those of us who are putting it out here for our people! Part of the conditioning is to have us grab hold of what we are offered by our enemy and to forsake that which is made by our people, and see it as somehow, sub-standard, inferior, or even a

"copy" of what THEY are doing. (I could write an entire article on just the IRONY of that).

NOW is the time. It is CRUCIAL that our people take control of, and buy into OUR OWN NARRATIVE, as told to us by Black loving, Black respecting US!

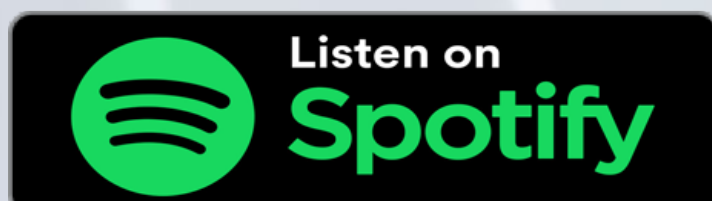


Iyapo Yapa is a cartoonist, graphic designer, and writer. He hosts the DRAPETOMANIAC PODCAST with his brilliant and beautiful wife Angela. He also hosts the READING and WRITING in the DARK Podcast. Iyapo is the Author of *MELANIN: A Novel* and the upcoming short story collection, *PARADIGM VOID*.



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:



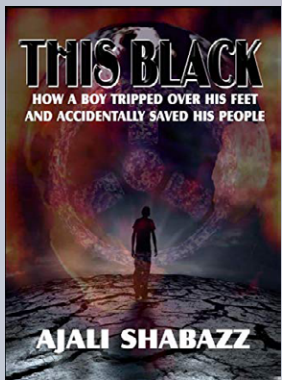
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Alright, enough about ME!

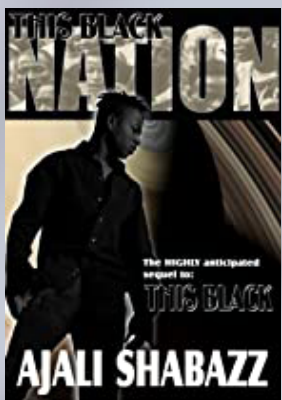
Below are books by some authors I know! Just click the the book cover to purchase their book.



THIS BLACK

Ajali Shabazz

'This Black' is the opening story of how Black People permanently freed themselves, and thus the world, from the grips of any persons who brought lies, and thus brought global oppression. An oppression which has, in real time, ground the entire planet to the brink of extinction through the ongoing hemorrhage of radiation from Fukushima Fallout. This work is designed to spread vital knowledge in an edge of your seat adventure, brimming with conflict, treachery, triumph, and fantastical scenarios. It's true Black history made irresistible, spanning thousands and thousands of years and millions of lives. Written for any age, from 12 to infinity, this tale depicts the Black Community as it actually is - in an ongoing process of freeing Ourselves from Mental Slavery

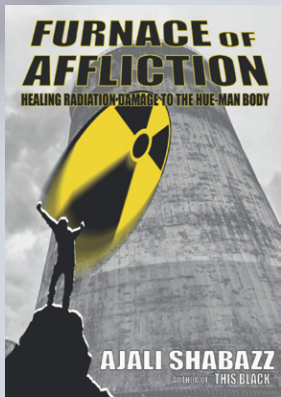


THIS BLACK NATION

Ajali Shabazz

The highly anticipated follow-up to 'This Black', 'This Black Nation' continues the saga of Tyree's determination to achieve victory against the increasingly radioactive reality we each face, and his growing precision in defeating his people's enemies. But, first? He has to defeat his own self-doubt. Good thing this time? He has a few hundred thousand friends.

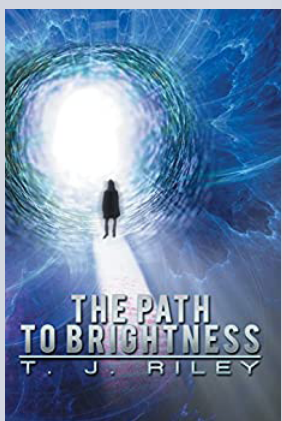
'This Black' is vital Pro-Black-Speculative fiction, which delivers a passionate clarion call to Our Family, intended to educate us about the dire nonstop hemorrhage of radiation from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant that is still spewing unchecked deadly isotopes, every minute of every day. By transforming the specter of a frightening catastrophe into nail biting great storytelling, this work increases common knowledge of that real time disaster, so we can employ the proven methods that will protect and repair this wounded planet, which is the only planet we have to call our home.



FURNACE of AFFLICTION

Ajali Shabazz

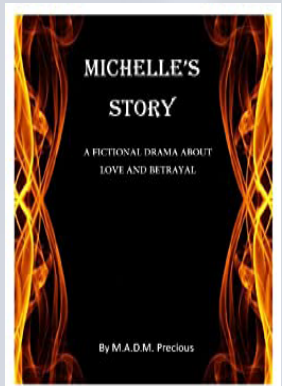
Following this book's guidance for withstanding the radioactive scourge of Fukushima Fallout and all things nuclear (turns out there's quite a LOT of sources of man-made radiation, with all of it deadly, down to a single atom or ionizing wave) - taking the enclosed steps as your new life enhancing permanent endeavors will eventually lead to many of your family, friends and even your coworkers (share it with just the ones you like) - eventually seeing you withstanding even the common cold, let alone the inevitable organ eviscerating carnage caused by this invisible atomic sized dagger.



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 Fatimas 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.



MICHELLE'S STORY

M.A.D.M. 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...

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>

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!