

SOJOURNER AHEBEE

WRITER
PERFORMER



ABOUT ME



Sojourner Ahebee writes stories about African diaspora identities and the eternal question of home & belonging. Sojourner believes not in the boat that floated her here but what she'll do with the water. Her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *The Atlantic*, The Academy of American Poets (Poem A Day), *Muzzle Magazine*, *For Harriet*, *Winter Tangerine Review*, and elsewhere. She has performed her work to audiences all over the world, including Michelle Obama, poet laureates, prime ministers, public intellectuals, and National Book Award winners. Her work

has reached people in likely and unlikely places: schools, libraries, concert halls, and nursing homes. And Sojourner has performed her work internationally, including Paris, Cape Town, London, Oxford, and Israel. In 2013, she served as a **National Student Poet**, the nation's highest honor for young poets presenting original work. Sojourner was invited to the White House by former First Lady, Michelle Obama, to garner her award. She graduated with high honors from **Stanford University(Class of 2018)**,

where she majored in African & African-American Studies. Her **debut poetry chapbook**, *Reporting from the Belly of the Night*, was released in August 2017.

This is a young woman's poetry with an elder's heart, unflinchingly traversing the oceans between slavery and social media. These are poems we long for and need but don't always see coming.

- YOLANDA WISHER
Philadelphia Poet Laureate

PUBLICATIONS

REPORTING FROM THE BELLY OF THE NIGHT

Daughter of the Yam Press, 2018

GHOSTS

Muzzle Magazine, 2017

LISTEN

The Stanford Arts Review, 2015

ON HUSHED SUGARCANE

The Atlantic, 2014

VALENTINE FOR SALLY HEMINGS

The Academy of American Poets, 2014

APPARITIONS/ NOTES ON APPARITIONS

Winter Tangerine Review, 2014

PERFORMANCES

National Book Festival (2013)

Featured Performer

United States White House (2014)

Featured Performer,

ft. Former Poet U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins

Aspen Ideas Festival (2014)

Ft. Lil Buck, Dancer

College Unions Poetry

Slam Invitational (2016)

Pecola Breedlove

& The Freedom Party (2017)

Featured Performer

Beer & Honey, Apiary Magazine (2018)

Featured Performer

Awards

Robert M. Gold Medal for Excellence in
the Humanities and Creative Arts,
Stanford University (2018)

Stanford Institute for Diversity in the
Arts Fellow (2017-2018)

Button Poetry Video Contest Finalist
(2017)

National Student Poet (2013-14)

Ron Brown Scholar (2014)

Traverse City Young Playwrights
Festival Winner (2014)

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Gold
Medalist (2014)

Knight Foundation Finalist (2012)

*Sojourner's poems are rapid with the genius, as these lyrics
unfold lush and sturdy from her versatile hand. Her
chapbook is a grand announcement, a declaration starting all
the way in the back of a mighty mouth.*

-- DANEZ SMITH,
National Book Award Finalist

BOOK SOJOURNER

Services

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[@daughteroftheyam](https://www.instagram.com/daughteroftheyam)



[@SojournerAhebee](https://twitter.com/SojournerAhebee)



BOOK TODAY!

GHOSTS

a poem by Sojourner Ahebee

california's first rain in months & two black girls biking down the wet
earth

semilore carries knuck if you buck on her tongue the whole ride, says
black people like rap so much because it is release,
sometimes the beat falls from our black mouths like a howl, the pink
of our tongues

blooming in a dark room,
where no one thought it would & how we open a wound
and make garden out of it, how we part the sea
with our teeth where an ancestor might have
jumped from a ship into, how we do it with language
& the ocean's salt stains our words white.

ghost me this way:

with our music keeping us closer
than the way they packed us on ships
with my mouth perpetually open like a wet rose,
singing a scream
with my hair plaited & greased down by grandma's hands
with the magnolia always in bloom like grandma's hands
as she plucked cotton from the root in her youth, or mended
a shirt a wound on my leg,
as she turned the steering wheel and drove
aimlessly for hours for all the time
women like her were refused mobility. Grandma presses
a foot to the gas & a slave girl comes alive inside of her, trying to move,
wanting
to be so close to us
& semilore's voice is somewhere in that in between,
the lyric cutting itself in half
to cut across time like a wet
blade & california turning two black girls into water,
our shirts sticking to our backs so close to us
we want to be so close to us