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A STAR IN THE FACE OF THE SKY

WRITING, TEACHING, AND WHAT I ATE

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NOVEMBER 17,
2012

By David Haynes
in BOOKS

Tags: DR. NJOKI
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This radiant presence is Dr. Njoki McElroy. For over a half a century she has been a force in the Dallas cultural scene. A pioneer in the use of drama and performance to build community, Njoki has devoted her life to sharing with the world the glories of African American literature and culture.

Each fall, as part of Dr. McElroy's African American Folklore class, the students create an evening of performances—this years theme: Relationships in African American Literature. It was my great honor to have my short story “Busted: A Boy's True Tale of Real Life in a Big City Junior High School” adapted by Njoki for the 2012 presentation. Busted was originally published by *Glimmer Train Stoires* (in it's 2nd edition!), was recorded for the National Public Radio program “Selected Shorts,” and appears in the novel *Heathens*, published by New Rivers in 1996.

Congratulations to all of Dr. McElroy's students for last night's wonderful performances, and thanks also to the [Master of Liberal Studies](#) program at SMU for their continued support of her important work. Special shout out to Michael Counter, Michelle Jenkins, Sarah Weatherford and William Searcy for bringing Ali, Verda, Ione and Principal Smutts to life so vividly.

And read Njoki's lovely memoir, *1012 Natchez: A Memoir of Joy, Hardship, and Love*.

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