Ayanna McNeill Bio

A native of “Pre-gentrified” Bed-Stuy, Ayanna McNeill grew up being exposed to the beauty of storytelling and the power of freeing people’s minds through writing. At the age of twelve, she fell in love with poetry and began writing.

The daughter of an educator, Ayanna learned the importance of education and the responsibility of sharing knowledge early in life. She attributes her upbringing to why she writes, and why she chose to become an educator and mental health counselor. She graduated from the nation’s oldest historically black university, Lincoln University PA in 2008. She then earned her Master’s from Alfred University in 2010.

As a poet, spoken word performer and cultural curator, Ayanna has been called, “Harriet Returned.” She created a LLC to promote her various artistic projects with the same name. Ayanna has performed on stage, television and radio alongside seasoned artists such as Saul Williams and Abiodun Oyewole of ‘The Last Poets’. Ayanna released her first collection of poetry *Before There Were Guns There Were Gods* in 2010.

Recently, she completed a trilogy of fictional suspense novels titled, *Half of What You See: The Scars of Love, None of What You Hear: Redemption and Repairs*, and *Everything You Feel: When Trauma Creates Mayhem*. Ayanna is also a Motivational Speaker in the process of creating a collection of motivational daily messages to be released later this year.