

# damali ayo

books • radio • speaking

[damaliayo.com](http://damaliayo.com)

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213-290-2037



## “damali has a story for everything.”

A friend once said this about me. I am not sure if he meant it as a compliment or a criticism. Either way, it is true. As a speaker, author, and visual artist, the real stories of my life are central to all I do. Two audience members recently said "damali is the most real person I have ever met." and "I had so many epiphanies during her visit." I used to wonder why I had experienced so many rich, varied, and often difficult things in my lifetime, now I know why.

Every time I share a story about some aspect of my life with an audience or reader, the response is that a perspective shifts, an isolation is breached, or laughter is shared. Frequently people pass along the stories I tell to others as they seek to connect, expand, and heal. It is in building connections between our experiences that the human world is brought closer to each other and through which we see true progress. Over the course of my lifetime I have faced challenges of racism, sexual violation, disordered eating, family trauma, and chronic illness. I have undergone significant identity shifts of race, sexuality, and spirituality. Through my journey I have come to believe that the greatest learning we do is in healing, although that rarely comes easily or quickly. Telling my story through the creative process has always been a part of healing myself and the world around me.

Let me share my stories with you.

damali ayo and her work have been featured in over 100 publications world-wide including Harpers, the Village Voice, Salon.com, the Washington Post, Seattle Times, Chicago Tribune, Redbook Magazine, the O'Reilly Factor, and Book TV. She has been a frequent guest commentator and essayist on public radio. damali is a dynamic personality who brings energy, inspiration, and positivity wherever she goes.

An expert story-teller, damali's books and presentations offer humor, insight, and creativity and make our culture's toughest topics manageable and fun. *How to Rent a Negro* was acclaimed as "one of the most trenchant and amusing commentaries on contemporary race relations." It was granted a 2005 Honorable Mention in the Outstanding Book Awards from the Gustavus Meyers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights. *Obamistan! Land without Racism: Your Guide to the New America* debunks the myth of a post-race world. Her writing and art have engaged issues including the creative process, spirituality, chronic illness, sexual assault, healing, music, and trash.

damali's new memoir takes its readers on a journey through a year of reclaiming her own femininity and the unexpected impact that had on her life. Through her trademark humor, bolstered by a remarkably vulnerable and open telling of her story, damali shows the reader that life is an ongoing process of growth and evolution.

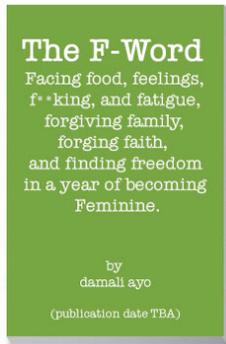
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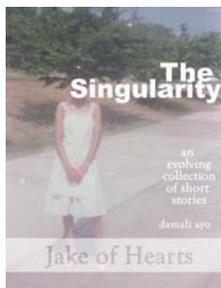
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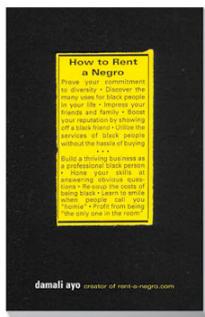
## **The F-Word: Facing food, feelings, f\*\*king, and fatigue, forgiving family, forging faith and finding freedom in a year of becoming Feminine.**

damali's new memoir that explores her year of becoming feminine. Through an unguarded revealing of her inner self, she shares how nearly every aspect of her life was changed. "A fresh, thought-provoking, honest, beautiful book." Publication pending.



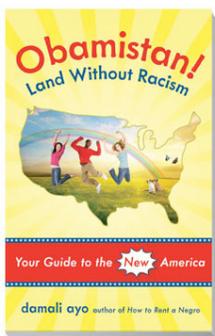
## **The Singularity**

A collection of semi-autobiographical short stories about "lonely girls and the ghosts of men." The stories are written for and about women whose "bodies are scattered across the universe and long to pull themselves back together and be whole again." Publication pending.



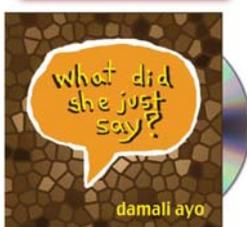
## **How to Rent a Negro**

A biting and unflinchingly humorous satire about race relations...for hire. Honorable Mention in the Outstanding Book Awards from the Gustavus Meyers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights. "A must-read book that gleefully blows past the boundaries of tentative talk on current race relations." -*Bust Magazine*. 2005 Lawrence Hill Books



## **Obamistan! Land without Racism: Your Guide to the New America.**

A satirical guidebook to a post-racism United States. "damali is a brilliant humorist, and this ironic romp through post-racial America is pure genius." - Anti-racist scholar, Tim Wise. 2010 Lawrence Hill Books



## **What did she just say?**

A collection of damali's public radio stories about making art, understanding race, adoring classical music, and employing the trash. Includes the sound art work "white noise." Public Radio International's Studio 360

Read and hear samples at [damaliayo.com](http://damaliayo.com)

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## Selected Appearances:

### Colleges & Universities

Babson College • Baton Rouge Community College • Bradley University • Bridgewater College • Butte College • City University of New York • Clark College • Colby College • College of Wooster • Emmanuel College • Emory University • Hampshire College • Hudson Valley Community College • John Carroll University • Lemoyne College • Linfield College • Maryland Institute for College Art • North Dakota State University • Northern Kentucky University • Portland Community College • Portland State University • Reed College • Ripon University • Rockford College • Saint Mary's • Saint Michael's • Sarah Lawrence College • Scripps College • Seattle Community Colleges • Shippensburg University • Spellman College • Stevens Institute • Syracuse University • Tacoma Community • Texas Women's University • Thiel College • University of Colorado • University of Illinois • University of Maryland • University of Massachusetts • University of Miami at Hamilton • University of Michigan • University of Oregon • University of North Carolina • University of South Dakota • University of Wisconsin • Washington State University • Washington University in Saint Louis • Wheaton College • Willamette University

### High Schools

Catlin Gabel • Chadwick • Midland • Northfield Mount Hermon • Paideia • University High School • The Urban School

### Conference & Organizations

Black Feminisms • City of Eugene • Cre8con • Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland • Faculty and Staff of Color Conference • Feminism in Pop Culture Series • Green Festivals • Harvard ExEL/Oregon Department of Education • Matrilineage Symposium • Oregon Peacemakers Conference • Peace and Justice Summit • Portland Art Museum, Contemporary Art Group • SAW Gallery • Student of Color Conference • Studio Museum in Harlem • Third Coast International Audio Festival • Women and Activism



## Keynotes

Memorable, engaging, multi-media experience covering timely topics including: women's issues • feminism/femininity • racial dynamics • disordered eating • sexual trauma • chronic illness • PTSD • family mental illness • spirituality • self-care/healing • and the creative process. Visuals, audio and the personal touch of real-life stories to help people relate to critical and sensitive issues in a meaningful way.

## Workshops

Are a time for creativity, experimentation, and action. Your needs dictate the program. Workshops are a great way to give your community members a start on their own creative or activist projects.

## Tea Times

A special place for members of your community to have their specific and individual needs met.

"damali is the **most real person** I have ever met."

"I had so many **epiphanies** during her visit."

~ Students, Holy Cross College

"damali's presentation was so helpful.

Her stories and approach to the topic were **compelling, engaging, and thought provoking.**"

~ Clackamas Community Land Trust