

MOTHE

ME (MOTH)

A Novel In Verse

By: Amber McBride

*A gift, an iron to smooth the creases
that wrinkle up your spirit.*

What is a novel in verse?

A novel in verse is exactly what the title implies, it is a novel that is written using poetry instead of prose.

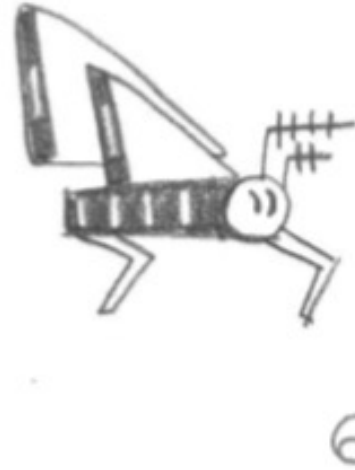
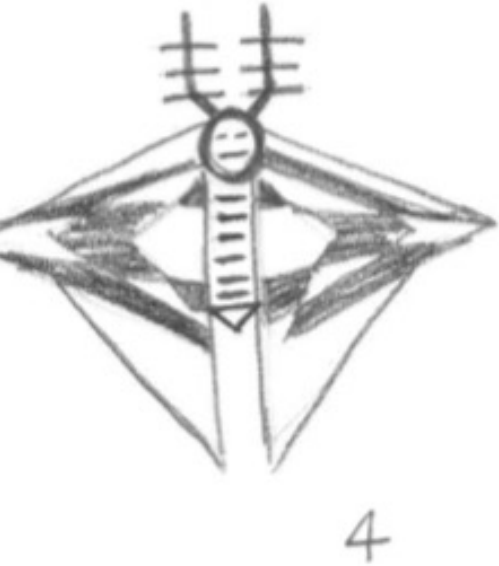
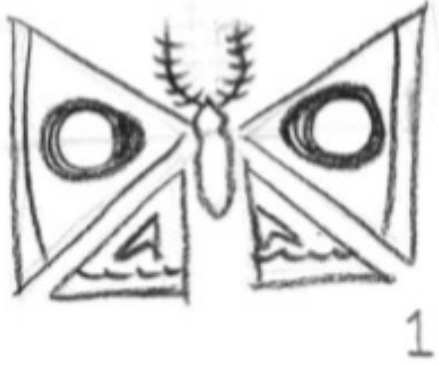
A novel in verse is different from a collection of poetry because there is still a clear plot for the reader to follow.

Some examples of novels in verse include; *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo, *A Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds and *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson.

Task: Why do you think an author decides to write in verse instead of prose? Do you like verse novels?

Task 2: Can you find at least two other novels in verse online and share them with the class.

artwork by Scott Keo



What Me (Moth) about?

Me (Moth) is a novel in verse about a girl named Moth and a boy named Sani who both feel invisible in their primarily white suburban city.

They are both grieving in different ways. Sani has an abusive stepfather and deals with clinical depression. Moth is still carrying the physical and mental wounds from the car crash that killed her mother, father and brother.

They decide to take a road trip to Sani's home, The Navajo Nation, and share stories along the way.

More about the novel here:

<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250780362>



Hoodoo/Rootwork In Me (Moth)

Use provided links on outline

picture taken by Amber McBride

What is Hoodoo

When enslaved Africans arrived in the United States, they were no longer permitted to practice their own spiritual traditions—Christianity was forced on them. Hoodoo is a magic system that grew out of that injustice. At its core, Hoodoo is a melding of West African spiritual traditions and Christianity. Often referred to as Rootwork, Hoodoo's ultimate goal is to shift the odds in your favor through ancestral worship, offerings, and work with herbs and plants.

Though it is practiced differently from region to region, at the root, Hoodoo highlights the strength and power of the ancestors. Hoodoo is neither good nor bad; it is balance. With the Great Migration, Hoodoo took hold throughout the United States.

picture taken by Mario McBride

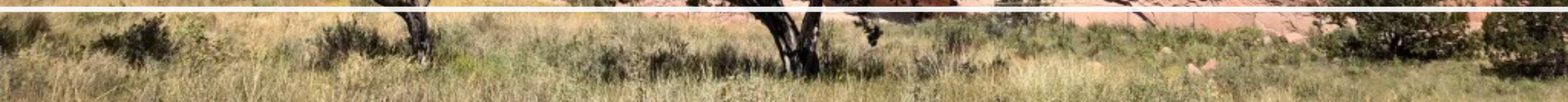




Navajo Stories and Traditions In Me (Moth)

use provided links on outline

picture taken by Debbie McBride





Navajo Nation

The Navajo Nation is a territory of just over 27,000 square miles that occupies land in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico. Although it is one of the largest reservations it is important to remember that Native Americans were forced from their homelands by the USA government. These forceful evacuations were often under horrendous conditions. Reservations only cover about 56 million acres which is only about the size of Idaho.

The Navajo also known as the Dine have many certation stories which Sani shares in *Me (Moth)*. Specifically, the creation of the 4 worlds. A great place to read more about these creation stories is (<http://navajopeople.org/blog/navajo-creation-story-the-first-world-nihodilhil-black-world/>).

picture taken by Debbie McBride

Tsi'naajinii

"Black Streak Forest
People"



Who are you?
What does diversity mean to you?
What do you want people to know about you?

picture taken by Debbie McBride



picture taken by Amber McBride



Themes Addressed in Me (Moth)

Take a second to discuss some of the themes you think Me (Moth) addresses. Why do you think the author decided to highlight these themes in the novel?

Here are a few examples of possible themes found within Me (Moth).

- The importance of identity.
- Dealing with loss.

Task: Try to pick two themes and find examples in the text that support your idea.

Discussion Questions

- How is foreshadowing used in *Me (Moth)*?
- Have you ever felt guilty about something? Why do you think Moth has survivor's guilt?
- If someone asked you what your identity was how would you answer?
- What do you think *Me (Moth)* says about the importance of being seen? Do you feel seen in your community, school or friendships? Why or why not.
- Do you have a favorite line in the book? Why is it your favorite and what do you think it means.
- If you were going to add a song to Moth's playlist, what would it be?

Discussion Questions (From Text)

What do you think this excerpt from page 3 of *Me (Moth)* is saying about names and remembering?

“Names outgrow you, like a garden left untended;
they don’t disappear
with the science that keeps out bodies alive.”

In the poems “Old South: Practice Apocalypse” and “Creation According to Sani” on pages 110-121, Moth and Sani share stories with each other. What similarities do you see in Moth and Sani’s stories?

What literary device is used on page 146 when it says:

It’s raining tap dancers again
& the motel is dim...

Why do you think *Me (Moth)* is divided into four sections (egg, caterpillar, cocoon and moth)?



About Me (Amber McBride)

Amber McBride is an English professor at the University of Virginia and holds an MFA in poetry from Emerson College. Her poetry has been published in several literary magazines including *Ploughshares* and *The Rumpus*. She lives in Charlottesville, Virginia with her dog, Shiloh. *Me (Moth)* is her young adult debut.

You can find Amber on social media: [@ambsmcbride](#). If you use the hashtag [#memoth](#), to ask a question or add to the playlist, she might drop in and say hi!

