

Lessons from a Stroke: Storytelling as Healing Process

by Vera Oye Yaa-Anna

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In my native land Liberia, we refer to God as "the old man upstairs." My Christian faith in a benevolent deity has nurtured me in my work as a storyteller. I believed I was destined to come to the United States and tell my stories. But never was this sense of destiny and nurture more tested and affirmed than when I suffered a major stroke.

There was nothing unusual about the start of that Los Angeles morning in March 1996. I woke up tired, as usual. A tightness at the back of my neck reminded me that I had a doctor's appointment, but I shifted my focus instead to a Palaver Hut production scheduled for month's end. In my excitement, I hurried to my office in Century City to address invitations for the event, forgetting the appointment. But as I began addressing the first envelope, my penmanship faltered,

[SNIP – End of preview.]