

# A Need for Multicultural Stories

*Your story is part of the record. Is it on the page?*

Somewhere in your family, there is a story that has never been fully written down. Maybe it is the story of how your grandmother survived something the history books do not mention. Maybe it is the story of a journey — across an ocean, across a border, across a language — that shaped everything about who you are. Maybe it is the story of a culture so rich and specific that when you look for it in libraries, in textbooks, in the media, you find only fragments, or silence, or someone else's version of it.

***That story belongs in the permanent record. Right now, in most cases, it is not there.***

## What Gets Lost When Stories Are Not Told

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Women of color have the most difficult time getting their writing published, regardless of medium. The publishing industry has historically excluded multicultural voices. Mainstream media has filtered, simplified, or ignored the stories of communities of color for generations. Archives, encyclopedias, and the digital databases where history is stored and passed forward reflect the people who controlled the tools to create them.

The result is a record that is incomplete. Not by accident. By design.

When a culture's stories are not documented by the people who lived them, those stories do not simply wait to be told later. They disappear. Elders pass away. Memories blur. Objects are lost. The specific texture of a life — the food, the language, the particular way a grandmother held herself, the political arguments at the kitchen table, the name of the ship that brought your family to this shore — fades until it cannot be recovered.

This is what erasure actually looks like. Not always dramatic. Often quiet. A generation that did not write things down. A family that assumed someone else would tell the story. A woman who believed her experience was not remarkable enough to matter.

It is remarkable. It matters. And the window to capture it is **now**.

## What Happens When Women Write Their Stories

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Every year, the Multicultural Women Writers Salon brings together women carrying stories that deserve to be told. Here is what four of them found when they finally put their stories on the page.

**Lena Galloway Reddick** / African American genealogy — Salem, Massachusetts

*"I thought I knew my subject — my cousin Sarah Parker Remond — inside and out. Research proved me wrong. I discovered streets she walked, places she lived, discrimination she faced in the 1800s that went far beyond what I'd imagined. Through her story, I began to understand the spirit that runs through the women in my family — it's not learned behavior, it's in our DNA."*

Lena uncovered a landmark 19th-century civil rights case and a seven-generation legacy of moral courage. Her story is now part of the national historic archive.

**Jessica Melbourne** / Vietnamese American — New Bedford, Massachusetts

*"This experience has given me valuable time to revisit, dig deeper and celebrate my culture. Because of this writer's salon, I have learned from other strong women, which has shaped my future as a social worker."*

Jessica's story opened with jade bangles on a bathroom counter and traced her bicultural identity across two continents. She is now a published author.

**Keiko-san Nakamura** / Japanese American — WWII adoption across Okinawa and the United States

*"I trusted Paula enough to share my deepest feelings, including being so overwhelmed with the history of the bombing of Nagasaki that I didn't want to finish my story. Paula said to me, 'Go to the ocean and ask the ancestors if your story is important enough to finish.' Of course, when I called her back, I told her I wanted to finish — and I'm so proud that I did."*

Keiko carried her adoption story for her entire life. She finished it. The little pink dress she wore the day her American parents brought her home — she still has it today.

**Naia Barros** / Cape Verdean American — New Bedford, Massachusetts

*"Paula is passionate about showing women like me that our story is worth telling. Her work gives those who don't know how to voice their stories the ability to do so, through these journals."*

Naia's story spanned colonial history, a schooner in a storm, and a living room where the future first president of Cabo Verde visited when she was nine years old. She did not know it was publishable until she wrote it.

**What these four stories have in common:**

*Each began as a memory the writer was not sure was worth telling.*

*Each became a published document that belongs to the permanent record.*

*Each changed what the writer believed was possible for herself.*

## Why Multicultural Stories Matter Beyond the Individual

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When a woman documents her cultural heritage, she does something that extends far beyond her own family. She creates a resource for researchers, educators, and community organizations who need accurate, nuanced representations of communities that have been misrepresented or overlooked.

She contributes to the historical archive that future generations will draw on to understand who came before them and what they built and survived. She models for younger women in her community what it looks like to claim authority over your own narrative.

And she does something quieter and equally important: she tells every woman who reads her story that her own experience is worth documenting too.

This is how cultures survive. Not through institutions alone, but through individuals who decide that their stories deserve to be told with care, published with dignity, and placed somewhere that erasure cannot reach.

## The Women We Are Looking For

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You do not need to have a perfectly formed story. You do not need prior writing experience. You do not need to know how it ends.

You need a story connected to your cultural identity, your family heritage, your lived experience, or your ancestral history. You need the commitment to work through eight months of honest, rigorous writing. And you need the willingness to let your story become something larger than you imagined when you started.

The women who have come through this program were not all writers when they arrived. They were a social worker in training, a genealogist, a woman adopted across two countries in the aftermath of a world war, a daughter of the Cabo Verdean independence movement. They became authors. Their stories are in the archive. They are not going anywhere.

***Yours could be there too.***

## What You Will Build in Eight Months

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- ◆ **A publishable story** structured, researched, revised, and professionally edited from your first idea to final draft.
- ◆ **A published journal** your work in full color, with your name on the cover, printed and distributed to your family, your community, and the national archive.
- ◆ **A community** of multicultural women writers who will support your work and whose stories will expand your sense of what is possible.
- ◆ **A credential** as a published author with a permanent contribution to the historic record.

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**The Multicultural Women Writers Salon — Applications Open Each Spring**

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*Download the enrollment flyer and program handbook at [eworkstyle.org](http://eworkstyle.org)*

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