

# **Oh No! A ROACH**



**By Kawanya Isom**

**Illustrated by Barbara Williams**



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**Published by Kawanya Isom**

**I dedicate this book to all children who are born into this world disadvantaged.**

**Thank you, Lord, for allowing me to publish my first book.**

**I want to thank my husband Terrance and my daughter Alexis for their love, encouragement and support and all of my friends who became editors and book critics during the process of publishing this book. I pray that God blesses each of you beyond measure.**

# Oh No! A ROACH

*A story about finding happiness in one's self.*

**By Kawanya Isom**

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During the summer, I look forward to visiting my grandmother because she always has lots of interesting and sometimes scary stories to tell about her childhood.

Once she told me a story about a snake that crawled into bed with a little girl and coiled itself around her legs while she slept. I have to admit, later that night when I went to bed, I was a little scared, but I wasn't really worried. That girl didn't live in the city. Grandma said she lived in a little wooden shack back in the woods – “the country.” My teacher refers to it as “**rural** South Georgia,” but we just call it “the country.”



My grandma grew up in “the country,” and the settings for most of her stories take place in either the woods or on a dirt road; and almost always, somebody or some animal dies or almost dies from something.

...Anyway, Grandma said that the snake incident happened on a very cold night, and the poor animal wasn’t trying to hurt anyone.







“It was probably just trying to stay warm.”

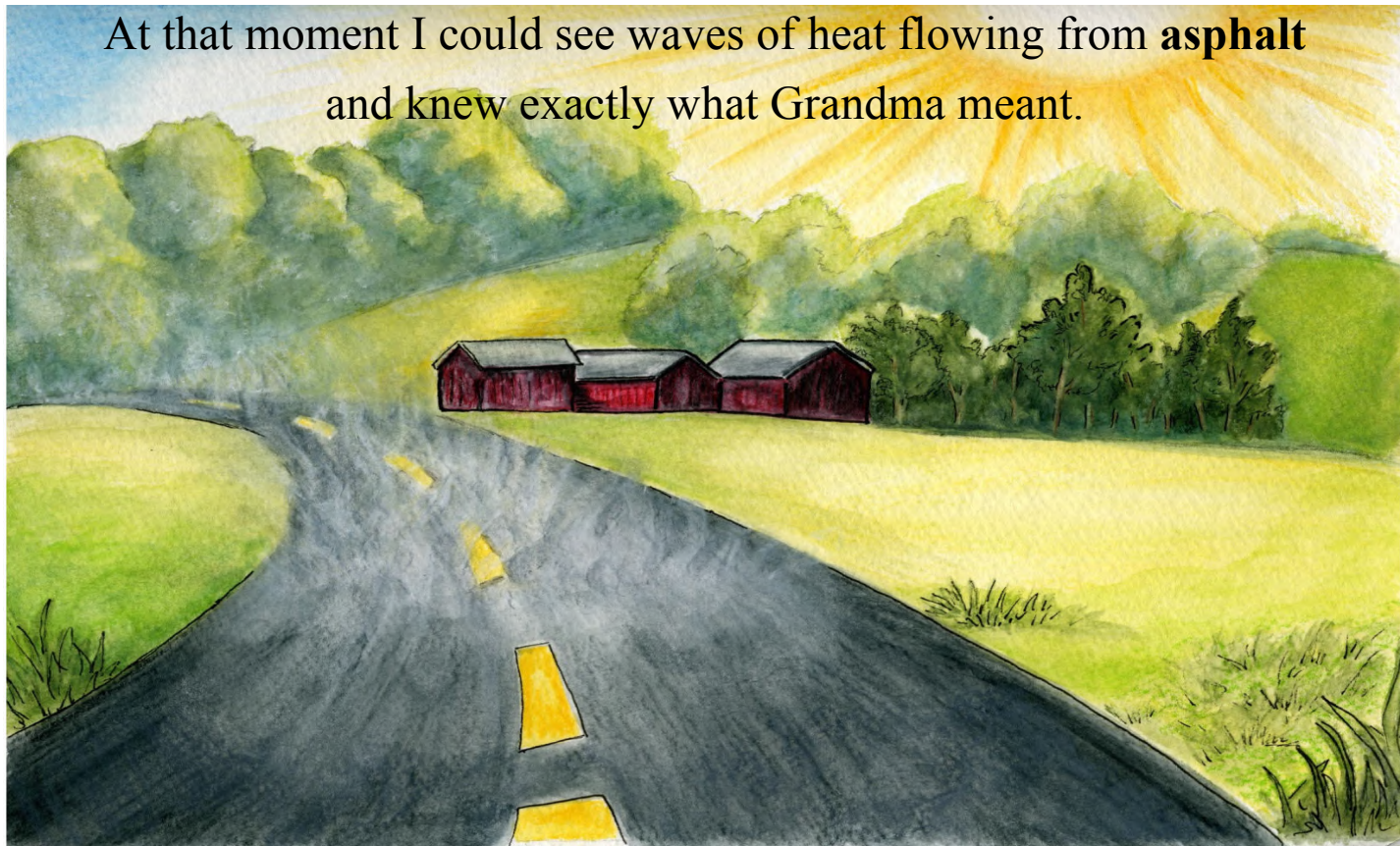




Grandma said that most people believe the **myth** that all snakes **hibernate** underground all winter; but the truth is even during the winter months, on warm days, some snakes come out to sun themselves. She said this snake probably had not been able to go back into his hole or maybe some hard-headed, little boy came along and moved him so far away from his hole, he didn't know where to go; so he went where he smelled warmth and safety.

Of course I asked, “Grandma, how can a snake smell warmth and safety?” She said, “Snakes can’t see very well, but they have a very keen sense of smell; and their tongues can taste the air for all kinds of things like food, water, danger, or weather.” She said that a snake’s vision would look to us like moving blobs of heat. My brow **furrowed**, and Grandma knew that I was confused, so she explained to me what she meant. She said, “Imagine looking down a paved road on a hot summer’s day. What would you see?”

At that moment I could see waves of heat flowing from **asphalt**  
and knew exactly what Grandma meant.



After thinking for a moment, I said to Grandma, “I bet that snake chose to get in bed with the little girl instead of her parents because he knew that she would keep him just as warm, and he didn’t have to be afraid of her.” Grandma laughed and agreed. “You’re probably right,” she said.

I guess I was about eight or nine when Grandma told me that story, and since then, every once in awhile I still check under my bed to make sure there are no snakes. I’m eleven now, and like I said earlier, I get a little scared sometimes, but I’m not really worried. I’ve lived in Houston Homes all of my life, and I’ve never seen a snake crawling in or near our **housing project**.





The only animals that seem to crawl around here are ROACHES!

Just thinking about them makes me want to scream! As a matter of fact, I think I'd be willing to sleep with a snake if it meant that I'd never have to see another ROACH. I can list a lot of reasons for not wanting to live in the projects: the apartment walls are thin, so you can't even have an argument without people being all up in your business; policemen are always driving around watching people like everybody is a criminal; and if you live in the projects, some people look down on you and judge you.

BUT! No matter how bad one of these reasons might sound,  
I don't think I hate anything more than a ROACH.

