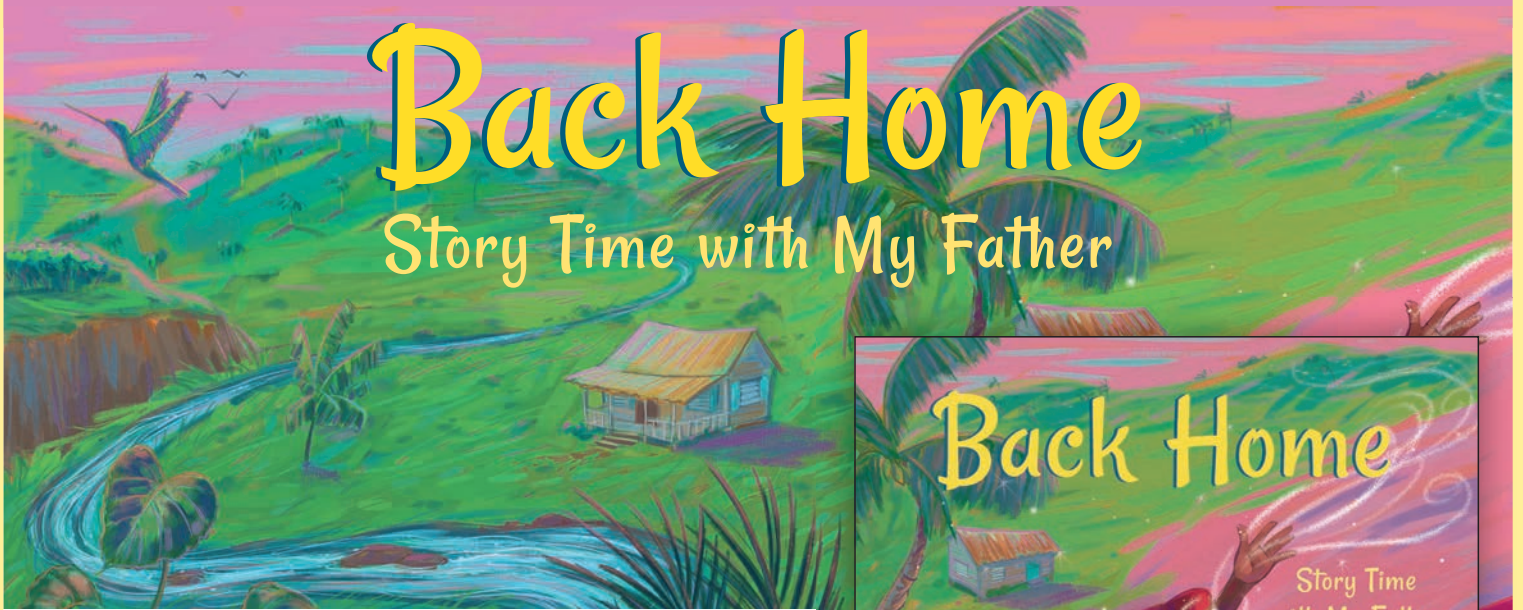


A lyrical text and vivid, luminous imagery transport readers to Haiti through a father's tales and a child's imagination—and invite them to tell stories of their own.

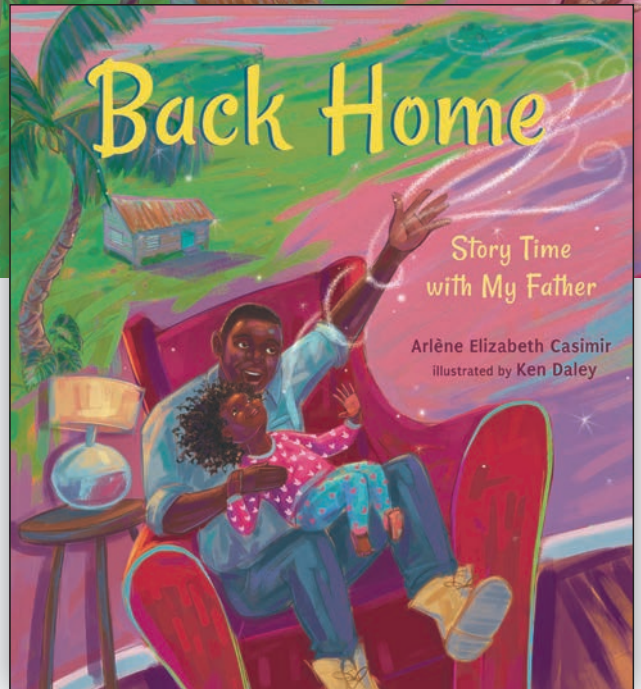
# Back Home

## Story Time with My Father



**Krik! Krak!**  
**This is how story time begins.**

Lune loves hearing her daddy's stories—the funny ones, the sad ones, the ones with lessons about truth and love. Whether evoking an ill-fated climb up a mango tree or life after a hurricane, flying over magical mountains or the healing power of a mother's love, all of Daddy's stories begin with "lakay"—back home—and each one ushers Lune to Haiti, her father's homeland, a place she doesn't know but can see, hear, and feel when she closes her eyes. Daddy is her favorite book, and sometimes she stays up late just to hear another story when he gets home from work. Everyone has stories, her mommy tells her, so Lune begins to wonder: Could she have stories of her own, too? Author Arlène Elizabeth Casimir offers a love letter to her parents' birthplace and to the ways storytelling can bring us together, illustrated in lush, enchanting colors by acclaimed artist Ken Daley. Included are a glossary and two author's notes—one to caregivers and teachers, one to kids—providing ideas and encouragement for sharing the power of story.



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\$18.99 (\$24.99 CAN) • Ages 4-8 • 40 pages

Also available as an e-book



Photo by MARTA SKORO Madams

**Arlène Elizabeth Casimir** is a passionate author, educator, consultant, herbalist, and healer. She is also the founder and CEO of two ventures that honor her Haitian ancestral lineage. *Back Home: Story Time with My Father* is her first book with Candlewick Press. She lives in Brooklyn.



**Ken Daley** is an artist who draws inspiration for his work from his African Caribbean roots. He is the illustrator of several picture books, including *Jayden's Impossible Garden* by Mélina Mangal and *Auntie Luce's Talking Paintings* by Francie Latour. He lives in Ontario, Canada.



## A Note from Arlène Elizabeth Casimir

Many immigrant families use the phrase “back home” to refer to their native land. My mother left “back home” in 1978 and my father in 1980, but back home never left their hearts. Their paths aligned in Brooklyn, New York, where I was born. I watched them work incredibly hard to provide for me and my siblings, to take care of their families back home in Haiti, and to create a life they could be proud of here in the States. Their shared commitment to preserving Haitian food, language, and stories in our home influenced how I identify as a Haitian American: someone whose roots reach back home and whose trees and fruits flourish here in the United States.

Although I have visited my mother’s city of origin in Haiti, I have yet to go to Anse-à-Veau, Haiti (Ansavo, Ayiti), where my father is from. Being able to go to my father’s coastal city is one of my biggest wishes—yet to be fulfilled. That didn’t stop me from traveling there in my imagination to write this book. I felt like I had been there many times while listening to his stories as a child. My father was deeply engaged in ensuring I had all the opportunities he did not have. He had a strict outer life and worked through exhaustion as a baker, a janitor, and a clerk, but that’s not all he was. My father also had a rich inner life, filled with magic and struggle, and no matter how tired he was when he came home, he made time for me. One day he brought home a discarded chalkboard from his job and hung it up in our living room. At age four, I loved teaching him on that chalkboard. My father was my first student and my first teacher. He helped me to understand who I am, to know where I came from, and to imagine who I could be, freely and fearlessly.

I wrote this book for every child who knows so much about their country of origin and yearns to visit “back home” because of their parents’ commitment to sustaining their culture in a foreign land. As a former classroom teacher, I also wrote this book to urge educators to welcome students and their families to tell their stories. By modeling and sharing our narratives, we help others to realize their inherent power to learn from the past and to author their own stories.

