

## *Biography*

**Bayo Ojikutu** is a second-generation product of the Great Northern Migration (US) & a first generation son of postcolonial Nigerian emigration. His maternal grandmother was brought to Chicago, IL as a swaddling by her immediate family in 1921, escaping the sway of Jim Crow in Shreveport, Louisiana. Ojikutu's Yoruba father arrived in the United States in 1968 as his homeland fractured in inter-tribal conflict over fertile land, dogmatic ideology and the capitalized resources that infused the so-called Biafran War. The author's parents met at Roosevelt University in Chicago & wed in 1970. They raised Ojikutu and his siblings in metropolitan Cook County, IL.

Ojikutu graduated the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science. He has taught creative writing with the University of Chicago, DePaul and at the Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies at the University of Chicago.

Ojikutu is the author of the critically-acclaimed novels *47th Street Black* (2003) and *Free Burning* (2006). Ojikutu's short fiction has appeared in the Akashic Press anthology *Chicago Noir*, the *Other Voices* literary journal, among other collections. In 2009, his short "Yayi and Those Who Walk on Water: A Fable" was shortlisted as a Special Mention as among the year's notable fiction by the national Pushcart Prize. He has been the winner of the Washington Prize for Fiction, the Great American Book Award, and a 2008 Excellence Award for Outstanding Achievement in Literature (Fiction).

Ojikutu married Carolyn Ojikutu (nee Lewis), whom he'd met during his undergraduate studies. In 2008, the couple was blessed with their greatest pride and most vibrant joy, their son, Malik Abassi Olayinka Ojikutu.