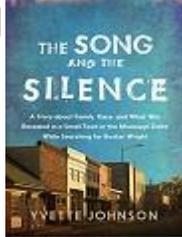


## Booklist Review

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**The Song and the Silence: A Story about Family, Race, and What Was Revealed in a Small Town in the Mississippi Delta While Searching for Booker Wright.**

**Johnson, Yvette (author).**

May 2017. 304p. illus. Atria, hardcover, \$26 ([9781476754949](#)). 976.3.

[REVIEW](#). First published [April 15, 2017 \(Booklist\)](#).

Raised in California by parents from Greenwood, Mississippi, Johnson was once determined to believe that race was inconsequential, until she was married with two sons and when she saw a clip of her grandfather, Booker Wright, in the 1966 documentary *Mississippi: A Self-Portrait*. In it, he speaks candidly about being a black waiter in a fine Greenwood restaurant, where he would regularly sing the menu to pleased customers, an appearance, that, once aired, would cost him dearly. Captivated by his presence and words, which Johnson soon discovered had reverberated throughout the nation, she began a fevered search for information about Wright, her family's history, and their ancestral home in "the darkest corners of the Delta." In the process, she examines her upbringing and attitudes about racial identity while understanding her parents in a new way. In addition to beautiful, evocative descriptions, a great strength of Johnson's writing lies in her unique ability to absorb and relay several dimensions of conversations about painful and emotional topics. Johnson also produced a 2012 documentary film about Wright, and readers will find her highly researched story—about the grandfather she never knew, and so much more—profound, powerful, and extremely relevant.— *Annie Bostrom*

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