Salt-Water Geechee Lexical Heritage Dictionary:
Based on God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man
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ab·so·lute good (adj.) /əbˈsoʊˌluːt ˈɡʊd/ : A term used to describe something large in size or ferocity.
Ex: "They were standing there talking and something sparked them off. I never knew what it was, but they had an absolute good argument."
Chapter 17, page 174 [Andrew Lettich]

Af·ri·can gri·ot /a-frə-kən gri-ot/ n the person who kept the oral history of the tribe. Ex: “So I try to be as much as I can like an African griot. The griot kept the oral history of the tribe, as it had been passed down for thousands of years. He was in charge of remembering everything. He was a storyteller.”
Ch 30, pg 324 [Muriel Lange]

a·mee·n (n.) /əˈmiːn/: dialectal variation of the word Amen.
Ex. “It was a long string and he and Phoebe, his wife, would pray on those beads, and then she would say ‘Ameen, Ameen’” (Ch. 13, pg. 135). [Ashley Johnston]

Ann·i·ver·sar·y Sun·day (n.s) /ænəˈvɜːrəri ˈsnda/: 1. The first Sunday in May, 2. a church event as a celebrating marking the founding of the First African Baptist Church and celebrated as a holiday by those on Sapelo Island and adjoining communities on the mainland.
Ex: "The new suit came in time for Mama to wear it for Anniversary Sunday, the first Sunday in May […] the anniversary of the founding of First African Baptist Church…it's like a holiday."
Chapter 15, page 155 [Gale Skipworth & Lyschel Davis]

al·right (adj.) /əlˈraɪt/: in proper or satisfactory operational or working order, acceptable.
Ex. ‘That’s alright baby’, mama said” (Ch. 12, pg. 127). [Erika Parker]

A·maz·ing Grace /əˈmeɪzɪŋ greɪs/ n a traditional spiritual song
EX: All the time I was growing up I thought “Amazing Grace” was a traditional spiritual, written by a man who was black. I thought he was describing how he was treated, because who would have been more a wretch than a black man who was a slave? But when I was in Africa I learned something that turned my thinking upside down. That song was written by a white man by the name of John Newton.” Ch 30, pg 330 [Muriel Lange]

ass (as), n: American English variation for the term buttocks
EX: “You gotta get your ass off this Island” Ch 26, pg 257 [Lynne Tanzer]

Aunt Le·na’s Ditch (n.) /ænt ˈleɪnə dɪtʃ/: 1.from African American, the name of a drainage ditch that divides the North End of Sapelo Island from the South End. 2. in Saltwater Geechee folklore, an unknown figure named Aunt Lena falls into the ditch, and inadvertently locals call the ditch by her name.
Ex. “Aunt Lena’s ditch is a deep drainage ditch running across the Island and it probably was built so that rice in the nearby fields wouldn’t be underwater at harvest time” (Ch.10, pg. 113).
[Jeanne L. Bohannon]

Aunt (An’) Nan•cy (n.) /æn 'næn si/: from African folklore, a spider that can be a trickster, or in American folklore, can bring good luck and is not to be harmed.
Ex. “For good luck…we also had An’ Nancy the spider. That spider bring you good luck” (Ch. 8, pg. 87). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

Ba•by, Play Me a Piece of Cu•ba (v. phrase) /bebi, ple mI e pIs āf kyubə/: Phrase used to describe the act of playing Bolito, which was believed to originate in Cuba; see also Bolito. Ex: "The old people said Bolito was a Cuban thing and there were Cubans there. A few of the ladies even had an expression, 'Baby, play me a bit of Cuba.' “ Ch. 15, p. 153 [Gale Skipworth]

bac•ca chunk (n.) /bəca ʃən,k/: large log or piece of wood used as a foundational base for heating in a fireplace or wood burning stove. Ex. “what we call a bacca chunk, a lage log that would burn all day and cast hear out” (Ch. 8, pg. 82). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

bath•ed her in milk, (beθ d-hə-ın-mIlk), v, the only thing believed to pull heat out of a lightning strike was to wash the burns with milk
Ex: Some people said the family never should have taken Miss Catherine to the hospital before they “bathed her in milk.” Ch 25, pg 243 [Lynne Tanzer]

bed•ding up (bed ın āp) v. gardening term for preparation for planting seeds
Ex: She had been “bedding up” some rows. Ch 25, pg 241 [Lynne Tanzer]

beh•avior (n.) /b ʰev ər/: an old slave community in Sapelo that disappeared after slavery, named for a group of rebellious slaves who hid in the forest to avoid being sold into slavery and were considered unable to behave themselves until they left the woods.
Ex. “The area where those rebellious slaves lived was called Behavior from then on” (Ch. 13, pg. 137). [Ashley Johnston]

Behavior Cemetery (n.) /ˈhevər ˈslɛmlərɪ/: a cemetery in Sapelo, most likely near the old slave community, Behavior. Place reserved for the burial of the deceased and is located on the South End. Individuals have to ask the spirits permission to enter before opening the gates. Ex. “It was a slave community and it disappeared after slavery, but it was probably near the cemetery, the one I almost was buried in, that’s named Behavior Cemetery” (Ch. 13, pg. 137). [Ashley Johnston], Ex: “At twenty, Ophelia fit in that casket made for a three-year old and she was buried near Uncle Nero in Behavior Cemetery.” Ch. 20, p. 207 [Kim Cochran] Ex: When we left the church, we went down to “Behavior Cemetery” down on the South End. Ch 24, pg 237 [Merry Luong]

Belle Marsh (n.) /ˈbɛl mɑrʃ/: community on the West side of Sapelo Island Ex. “They would make sure I could hear them and say things like, ‘Oh look at that one there, she’s one of those dumb people from Belle Marsh’” (Ch. 12, pg. 127). [Erika Parker] Ex: “First, Belle Marsh closed in 1950” Ch 26, pg 261 [Lynne Tanzer]

beside her·self /biˈsaid hərˈself/: adjective; used to describe an individual who has excelled beyond where he/she should be or he/she has an air of superiority. Ex: She’s done gone and got “beside herself.” Ch, 23, pg 221[Merry Luong]

biddy (n.s.) /ˈbɪdi/: a young chicken
Ex: “It was a young chicken, a biddy.”
Synonyms: chick, chicken

biddies (n.pl.) /ˈbɪdiz/: Ex: “I saw you’ puppy inside my chicken house killin’ my biddies.” Chapter 19, page 193 [Kim Cochran & Nickesha Thompson]

Big House, /ˈbɪɡ ˈhɑːs/, n: the main house on the island. Ex: The “Big House” had been lit with lights the whole time I was growing up. Ch 27, pg 267 [Lynne Tanzer]

Bi·la·li (n.) /bɪˈla li/: the name of one of the first West African slaves brought to Sapelo Island, Georgia approximately in 1803. Bilali Mohammed was a slave from Sapelo Island, Georgia. Born in Timbo, Guinea around 1770, he was enslaved as a teenager and was held as a slave for ten years in the Middle Caicos plantation of Dr. Bell, a Loyalist refugee from the Revolutionary War, before he arrived in Georgia in 1802. In Georgia he became the head driver on Thomas Spalding’s Sapelo Island based plantation. Ex. “If you had been standing on the white sands of this island at Dayclean in 1803, or little later, you might have seen a tall, dark-skinned man with narrow features, his head covered with a cap resembling a Turkish fez, unfold his prayer mat, kneel and pray to the East while the sun rose” (Dayclean, pg. 1). [Jeanne L. Bohannon], Ex: "Bilali was Muslim and he believed in his faith." Ch. 15, p. 158 [Khalia Handy], Ex: “It’s said that Bilali means ‘the first muezzin,’ the son of Ali, who was the son of Mohammed.” Ch 28, pg 290 [Muriel Lange]
Bi·la·li’s Jour·nal /blæ-lis jərn-l/ n a book of Bilali’s writings
Ex: “A rare book on loan from the University of Georgia’s Library.” Ch 28, p. 288 [Muriel Lange]

birthed (v) /bɜːθd/: to deliver a baby.
Ex. “Ada had gone to see the midwife, to see Miss Katie, because it was the midwife, who birthed babies over here.” Ch. 7, pg 73 [Sharon Mitchell]

black cat (n) /blæk kæt/: a feline whose fur is uniformly all black considered to be good omens. Ex. “A black cat wasn’t bad luck, it was good luck.” Ch. 1, pg 9 [Sharon Mitchell]

Black·beard Is·land (n) /blæk blərd əi lənd/: an island northeast of Sapelo Island, named after a pirate who conducted raids on merchant ships. Ex. “Blackbeard island is a big island that’s so close to the bluff that it almost looks like it’s art of Sapelo.” Ch. 6, pg 61 [Sharon Mitchell], Ex: It was the storm that destroyed the hospital on “Blackbeard Island” and floated the lumber over to the Bluff. Ch 27, pg 273 [Lynne Tanzer]

Bluff (n.) /blʌf/: A place located in South Carolina formally known as “Raccoon Bluff.” Ex. We always called it “the Bluff,” we never said Raccoon Bluff. Everything centered around the Bluff to us. Ch. 6, pg. 60 [Shelby Clemons], Ex: “Many of the people left at the Bluff in the sixties were elderly.” (Ch 26, p. 262) [Lynne Tanzer]

blue her·on (n) /blu ˈhərn ən/: a large bird having blue-gray plumage and a predominantly white head with a dark.

Ex. “He heard the sound of something rising up and large wings flapping quick-like and a pojo’, a blue heron flew away” (Ch. 11 pg. 118-119). [Erika Parker]

Bo·li·to (n) /boʊ ˈli to/: “A numbers game that can be defined as a type of lottery, popular on the Atlantic seaboard for the first half of the twentieth century, flourishing on Sapelo Island in the 1950s. The game is played by players betting on a series of three numbers from 0 to 999. Numbers runners would collect the money from the bettors each day, leave each bettor a receipt from what was called a ‘policy book,’ and then take the cash and policy book to the clearing house, also known as a policy bank. A player would win if his/her numbers matched a preset series of three numbers, which were found in daily newspapers as the last three digits of either the NYSE total, US Treasury balance, or total bets at a selected racetrack 2. a gambling game, in which individuals bet on a number that they hope will be the winning number of a large jackpot. (The selection of the winning number is unknown) See also “Bolito Man” Ex. “We also believed in Dr. Buzzard, the root doctor, whom people other laces call the voodoo man, and a lot of us played Boito.” Ch. Dayclean, pg 8. [Sharon Mitchell].

Ex: "Bolito was big on this coast, child, not just on this island, when I was growing up in the 1950s […] It was illegal, just like moonshine was, but the numbers game was important to people." Ex: “No one on Sapelo ever got arrested for playing Bolito.” Ch. 15, p. 156 Chapter 15, page 145 [Gale Skipworth & Lyschel Davis]
Bolito Man (n.s.) /bolito mæn/: Term for the unknown individual who ran the Bolito game participated in by members of the Sapelo Island communities. See also “Bolito.” Dr. Buzzard, the root doctor or voodoo man. Ex. “And as for me and my family, we shall praise the lord, and I opened my mouth and added, and Dr. Buzzard and the Bolito Man.” Ch. Dayclean, pg [Sharon Mitchell]. Ex: “Everybody knew about the Bolito Man: the numbers man, the numbers racket man… he could be anywhere, he could even be down in Florida near the palm trees.” Chapter 15, pages 145, 153 [Gale Skipworth]

bonkers /bæn kərs/ adjective: crazy or mad. Ex: Some women went kinda “bonkers” and were sent to the state mental hospital until they got better, but Mama wasn’t like that. Ch 23, pg 220 [Merry Luong]

Bourbon Field (n) /bɔːr bɔːn fil/: west side of the island. Ex. “People moved away from Bourbon Field, and Hanging Bull dwindled and died.” Ch. 5, pg. 49 [Sharon Mitchell].

Brunswick; (brəns-wək), n: waterfront city in the state of Georgia. Ex: …including an African American lawyer who is now a judge in “Brunswick.” Ch 27, pg 275 [Lynne Tanzer]

Brer Rabbit (n.) /brɛr ’ræ bæt/: a trickster, literary character from African and Native American folklore, featured in the Plantation Fiction genre and the works of Joel Chandler Harris (1870s) in America along with other animals. The Brer Rabbit is often portrayed as a “trickster,” a character that plays tricks on others. Ex. “Brer Rabbit and the Sweet Potatoes” (Ch. 8, pg. 83). Also: Brer [brɛr] n. May be spelled Bre'r or Bruh. [Jeanne L. Bohannon], Ex: “So the old people said that’s why the flounder has both eyes on one side of his face. It’s because Christ put a curse on him. That story was about as familiar around our house as Brer Rabbit.” Ch. 17, p.176 [Andrew Lettich], Ex: Just like “Brer Rabbit,” Asberry was it. Ch 22, p. 213 [Merry Luong]

buckra (n.s. or pl.) /bʌkra/: a somewhat derogatory term used to describe a white man or men who supervises or governs, specifically to indicate identity as “outsider”; also used as a derogatory term for a group of white people, not necessarily men, who enter as outsiders.

Ex as singular: “But we never saw the buckra man at Belle Marsh.” (p. 92)

Ex intended as plural: “‘Good lord, more buckra coming over to the island,’ Grandma was saying.” (p. 210)

Ex used in plural form: “We were up on the North End of the island on our own property and no buckras came around here.” Chapter, page 92; Chapter 21, page 210 [Kim Cochran]

Buckra man (n.) /bʌkra mæn/: a white man who surrounds or governs those around him and may not engender trust in those he governs. Usu. Differentiated in clothing, demeanor, and appearance from other white men. Ex. “I never remember any Buckra men coming to visit Papa, until he started to build us a new house. That’s when the trouble began” (Ch. 9, pg. 92). [Jeanne L. Bohannon] Ex: Grandma hated “buckra,” the kind of white man that got
in your business. Ch 26, pg 252 [Lynne Tanzer]

**Butler’s Island** /bət-lərz əi-land/ n An island on the Georgia Coast. EX: Pierce Butler of St. Simons and Butler’s Island… was another person who bought Ibo slaves Ch 28, pg. 281 [Muriel Lange]

**Bul-Allah** (n.) /bʊl ˈələ/ another name for Bilali, commonly used in articles or by non-family members. Ex. “I picked it up and was reading it and all of a sudden, there was someone called Bul-Allah who had worked for Thomas Spalding” (Ch. 13, pg. 133). [Ashley Johnston]

**bull** (n.) /bʊl/: a term used during slavery to describe a large, strapping black man. Ex. “A large, strapping black man was sometimes called a bull back then, and according to that story, that’s how the old slave community of Hanging Bull got its name” (Ch. 13, pg. 136). [Ashley Johnston, Danielle Oves]

**Buzzard Lope** (n.s.) /baˈzərd lɔp/: a dance performed on Sapelo during Walker Bailey’s childhood. Bailey’s father, and a group of his drinking friends would do it, imitating the duties of a lead buzzard. Usually the dance is done to the beat of a stick—in Walker Bailey’s father’s case, a broom stick. Walker Bailey describes the dance as a shout. See also “shout.” Ex: "Now, the Buzzard Lope is what everyone on Sapelo called a shout, and other islands called a ring dance shout." Ex: "[…]they’d start off joyful but by the time the men would get up and do the Buzzard Lope, Papa would have tears in his eyes.” Chapter 18, page 178 [Andrew Lettich & Nickesha Thompson]

**by** (prep.) /bɪ/: near to or next to. other forms. Adv. near ; in the immediate vicinity; at hand; to and beyond a point near something; past Adj. situated to one side; secondary; incidental. Idioms. by and by, in a short time; before long; presently by and large, in general; on the whole. [Abena Agyire]

**calling the rain** (v. phrase) /ˈkæliŋ ˈden/ inflected forms—call, called: Phrase describing the sound of croaking frogs, believed to be the act of the frogs God-given purpose, to respond to drought, also used as an idiom to express exasperation with a period of rain. Ex: ”The frogs would get thirsty and you heard them making a racket calling for rain […] If it had been raining a long time and the frogs were still calling for rain Grandmama or Mama would say, ‘Oh shut up. We got enough rain. Ain’t you satisfied yet?’” Chapter 15, page 152 [Gale Skipworth]

**Can’non’s Point** /kæn ən ˈpɔnt/ n a plantation on St. Simon’s Island. EX: John Couper, who owned the plantation on Cannon’s Point on St. Simons…” Ch 28, pg 281 [Muriel Lange]

**Cap’n** (kæp ən) n: contraction of captain Ex: There were a few white kids on Sapelo, children of “Cap’n Frank” Ch 26, pg 252 [Lynne Tanzer]

**carriage** /kær-əj/ manner of holding the body. Ex: – “I think his [Bilali’s] carriage and what he stood for would have set him above other people whether he was the head driver or not.” Ch. 28, p. 288 [Muriel Lange]
**cast net** (n.) /ˈkæst n/: long net used for fishing, narrow at the top and wide with weights at the bottom. Ex. “When you throw it just right, it glides over the water, opens up in a big, wide circle, and sinks down over any fish that happen to be in that spot” (Ch. 8, pg. 81). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**caste** /ˈkæst/ n 1: One of the hereditary social classes in Hinduism 2: a division of society based on wealth, inherited rank, or occupation 3: social position 4: a system of rigid social stratification. EX: – “To the planters, the Muslims’ Arabic-looking narrow features were indicative of a higher caste than the other Africans.” Ch. 28, pg 288 [Muriel Lange]

**cat’s-eye frame glasses** /ˈkæts ai frem glæs/ noun: Type of eye glass frames that are shaped similar to the shape of cat eyes. Ex: She would breeze into a room with her ‘cat’s-eyes frame glasses’ and a smile that showed on gold tooth and every child would instantly jump to attention. Ch 23, pg. 218 [Merry Luong]

‘cause (conj.) [ˈkɔz]: diminutive for “because,” meaning due to the fact that Synonym: since Ex: “We’ll never know ‘cause that secret went to the grave with Ophelia.” Ch. 20, p. 208 [Kim Cochran]

**chawed** (v.) /ˈchæd/: to grind with the teeth; to masticate, as food in eating; to chew. Ex. “The news got around the community that they’d found Cousin Charles and what bad shape he had been in and Grandma and Mama and all the old people chawed on that bone day” (Ch.11, pg. 120). [Erika Parker]

**chewing tobacco** (n.) /ˈchju win təˈbækə/ a form of tobacco chewed by the women on Sapelo Island until the tobacco was mushy; used to spit in childrens’ eyes when they were caught listening to adult conversations. Ex. “When she was a child, all the women chewed chewing tobacco. They would chew it until it got nice and mushy and if they caught a child listening to adult talk, they would take aim and spit right in that child’s eye, p’tui!, she said, and ‘that chile got a eyeful of tobacco and he ain’t botherin’ your conversation no more’” (Ch. 13, pg. 131). [Ashley Johnston]

**chile** (n.) /ˈchail/: dialectal variation of the word child, meaning a juvenile person, a term of endearment to others Synonym: kid, youngster, youth Ex. “Bury the chile, whatcha y’all waitin’ for?” Ch. 1, pg. 15 [Sharon Mitchell]. Ex. “Chile, get me those shoes…” (Ch. 8, pg. 87). [Jeanne L. Bohannon] Ex. “Soon the old people said, ‘Chile, I remember when the hag would come ride me all the time.’” Ch. 21, p. 212 [Kim Cochran, Gale Skipworth, & Andrew Lettich]

**chippy** (n.) /ˈchi pi/: young woman. Ex. “Grandma was no young chippy, she was about thirty-one then, and Grandpa was twenty-nine”. Ch. 5, pg. 53 [Sharon Mitchell].

**chirren** (n.) /ˈĉIrn/: dialectal variation of the word children. Also chillen /ˈĉIln/ and chirn /ˈĉIrn/. Ex. “Chirren, whatcha y’al doing back here?” Ch 6, pg 70 [Sharon Mitchell]. Ex. So we went back to the Bluff and Grandma said, “Chirren, watcha y’al doing back here?” Ch.6, pg. 60 [Shelby Clemons] Ex. “Okay, chirren, just one more” (Ch. 8, pg. 87).
chopping block, (čap·ən·blak), v: about to die
Ex: In 1975, our worst fears were staring us in the face because the world was that we were on the “chopping block.” Ch 27, pg 274 [Lynne Tanzer]

Clausen (n.) /cla zən/: a brand name of white sandwich buns and bread, manufactured and sold in southern Georgia.
Ex. “the Clausen bread with the little white girl on the label” (Ch. 10, pg. 107). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

c’mon (v.) /kuh mon/: informal contraction of come on. “C’mon kids, c’mon up, “, and we’d run and catch up with Mama and Michael and Barbara and then we’d go ahead of them. Ch 5, pg. 44 [Abena Agyire]

cicada (n.s.) /sɪkədə/ 1. an insect common in the American South, classified in the order Hemiptera, suborder Auchenorrhyncha, in the superfamily Cicadoidea, and the loudest insect, able to be heard up to half a mile away when the adult male "sings" by vibrating membranes stretched over a pair of sound-chambers situated near the base of the abdomen.
2. Cicadas are sometimes colloquially called "locusts", although they are unrelated to true locusts, which are a kind of grasshopper.
Synonym: locust
cicadas (n.pl.) /sɪkədəs/
Ex: "I'd hear frogs and cicadas chirping[…] the sounds were louder than they've ever been before, but I did not abandon my purpose."

Cinder block, (sIn·dr·blak), n: a light concrete block, used as the foundations of a building. It is made with cinder aggregate Ex: We had a nice, new “cinderblock” building. Ch 26, pg 264 [Lynne Tanzer]

clamming /klæm·ɪŋ/ verb: Going to catch clams or catching clams. Ex: Michael put on old shorts because they were going “clamming” down at McIntyre, off of Cabretta Beach. Ch 24, pg. 234 [Merry Luong]

click· (ed) off (klik·(d)·af), v: turned off Ex: She came in and saw me watching and clicked off the television. Ch 26, pg 254 [Lynne Tanzer]

collard green leaf (n.pl.) /kələd grɛn lɪf/: an edible plant, similar to a kale plant, grown in various regions of the world but especially in the southern United States
Ex: “Or Mama would say, ‘I’ll soak some collard green leaf in vinegar for you and we’ll put it on your forehead headache.’”
Chapter 20, page 201 [Kim Cochran]

Communion Sunday (n.s.) /kəmˈnʌniən ˈsændi/ The first Sunday of the month, on which the community of the First African Baptist Church participated in the Christian sacrament of holy communion. Also known as First Sunday. See also “First Sunday.” Ex: "Everyone went to church on Communion Sunday. We call it First Sunday, the first Sunday of the month."
Chapter 16, page 159 [Gale Skipworth]
com\-mode /kɔm əd/ noun: another term used to refer to the toilet. Ex: I had flushed a “ commode ” and turned on a light switch when I went into the bathroom. Ch 23, pg. 223 [Merry Luong]

c\-jure /kən jɔr/ v 1: to implore earnestly or solemnly; to practice magic; esp : to summon (as a devil) by sorcery  2: to practice sleight of hand. Ex: “…so many things that I had grown up with, from Brer Rabbit, stories to root and conjure.” Ch 28, p. 283-4 [Muriel Lange]

c\-ool\-ing board /kulɪŋ bɔrd/ noun: planks or an old door laid over a table or sawhorses and used to lay a corpse onto to prepare the body for burial. Ex: They laid him on a “cooling board” in the living room of his house and they put a sheet over him. Ch 24, p. 231 [Merry Luong]

Cor\-nel\-ia /kɔr-nil-yə/ n First name of Cornelia Walker Bailey, author of God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man. Ex: Cornelia, or Cornelia, for a man, was a name traditionally given to a child who was born on a Tuesday…I checked and I was born on a Tuesday.” (Ch 28, pg 291 [Muriel Lange]

cot\-ton\-pick\-ing (adj.) /ˈkɑt ən ˈplk ən/: used to mean damned or as a general intensive of opprobrium. Ex. “But it made me angry that some people could be so cotton-picking mean” (Ch. 12, pg. 127). [Erika Parker]

Crack\-ing up /Krækɪŋ əp/ v: An uninhibited burst of laughter. Ex. “And he’d be telling you stories and you’d be cracking up…”(Ch. 11p. 117). [Shemeria Claxton], EX: “Ronnister Johnson was the storyteller of the island. He’d keep you cracking up.” Ch 28, pg 292 [Muriel Lange]

Crape Myrtle (n.) /ˈkrep erətəl/: a flora variety featuring blooms deep rose in color, also called a watermelon flower, due to its coinciding with the ripening of watermelons in Southern fields. Ex. “We got some Crape Myrtle from another old house spot and planted that” (Ch. 10, p.111). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

creek, (crik), n, small stream Ex: He threw it in a “creek.” Ch 26, pg 257 [Lynne Tanzer]

Cre\-ole (n) [kri o]: dialect of West African languages mixed with English. African language(s) based on English. hybrids that blend linguistic influences from a variety of different sources. Ex. “What they learned to speak is called Creole, and that’s a lot like throwing everything into a huge pot, blending it together and simmering it into a delicious soup served over rice.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 4 [Sharon Mitchell]

Cross burn\-ing, (kras·banən), v: White supremacists called the Ku Klux Klan burned crosses as a way of intimidation. Previously it was used in Scotland to announce the declaration of war Ex: I saw the dogs and the whips and the jails, the “cross burnings” and the bombings and the slayings. Ch 26, pg 252 [Lynne Tanzer]
Cumber·land Is·land (n.) /ˈkʌmbərˌlənd əˈlaʊnd/: an island south of Sapelo. Ex. “Bilali did, and the British never came, and some people say that’s why, because they did take some other islands, like Cumberland Island, which is to the south of us” (Ch. 13, pg. 135). [Ashley Johnston]

cussing (v.) /ˈkʌsɪŋ/ inflected forms—cuss, cussed: swearing, using language termed “taboo.” This term refers to cursing, the act of using a swear word. Ex: “See, Grandma had a mean side to her and she did curses. I'm not talking about cussing, plain ordinary cussing. I'm talking about the curse.” Chapter 17, page 169 [Andrew Lettich]

“cussing and fussing” (v. phrase) /ˈkʌsɪŋ ənd ˈfʌsɪŋ/ inflected forms—“cuss and fuss,” “cussed and fussed”: A phrase used to describe complaining, which is to express grief or annoyance. Ex: “Since we moved to Hog Hammock, he'd started coming in cussing and fussing and going, 'I break my back and I don't get nuttin' for it, nuttin' but a hard way to go.” Chapter 18, page 184 [Andrew Lettich]

Dari·en /ˈdɑːriən/ n a location on the coast of Georgia. Ex: “Toward the end of his [Bilali’s] life, in about 1855, Bilali gave it [his journal] to the Presbyterian minister in Darien, Frances R. Goulding.” Ch 28, pg 289 [Muriel Lange]

Dau·fau·ski Is·land, (Da fa si ki a lan), n: island along the coast of South Carolina
Ex: Fancy new developments could be built in places like Hilton Head and

“Daufauski Island” in South Carolina. Ch 27, pg 272 [Lynne Tanzer]

Day·clean (n.) /ˈdeɪ kliːn/: time of day early in the morning around sunrise when clouds are making way for the sun rays and the darkness and fading away, said to make the world fresh again. Ex. “The sky was getting a little pale, it was dayclean now, and the first rays of light began to streak across the sky, and that glowing light vanished” Ch. 1, pg 1 [Sharon Mitchell], [Carolina Ferro] (Ch.11, pg. 120). [Erika Parker] EX: “…just before the rising of the sun, in that brief instant of time when the night clouds are being cleared away and the first rays of light are streaking across the sky…when the day is new and the world is made fresh again.” Ch 1, pg 281 [Muriel Lange]

dead of cold (idiom) [ˈdeθ kɔld] 1. to contract a severe cold. 2. a serious respiratory disorder. Ex. “She’ll catch a death of cold.” Ch. 5, pg 46 [Sharon Mitchell].

dock /dɔk/ noun.
1. The area of water between two piers or alongside a pier that receives a ship for loading, unloading, or repairs.
2. A pier; a wharf. 3. A group of piers on a commercial waterfront that serve as a general landing area for ships or boats. Often used in the plural. 4. A platform at which trucks or trains load or unload cargo. Verb. docked, dock·ing, docks
1. To maneuver (a vessel or vehicle) into or next to a dock. 2. To couple (two or more spacecraft, for example) in space. v.intr. To move or come into a dock.
Ex!al: “Reynolds also stopped a summer camp he started for underprivileged boys after he happened to be a dock at the end of camp one year and saw the boys being
picked up in expensive automobiles.”
(Chap 26, pg 259)

door (n.) /ˈdoʊr/: moving, usually solid barrier for opening and closing an entranceway, cupboard, cabinet, or the like commonly turning on hinges or sliding in grooves, a doorway, the building house, etc., which a door belongs. Any means, approach or admittance, or access any gateway marking an entrance or exit from one place or state to another.
Idioms: Lay at someone’s door, to hold someone accountable for; blame; impute leave the door open, to allow the possibility of accommodation or change; be open to reconsideration lie at someone’s door, to be the responsibility of; be imputable to own door. show someone the door, to request or order someone to leave; dismiss “He hung his head and cried like a baby,” Mama said. He brawled his heart out and then as he said about things, with the words rolling out fast; it was “kitty byth’ do’ r. Kitty by the door. Like a cat streaking out a cracked door. Like a cat streaking out a cracked door. Ch.4, pg. 42 [Abena Agyire]

Doctor Buzzard (Dr. Buzzard) (n.s.)
[dɔktərˈbʌzərd]: Community figure known for using magic, herbal remedies and/or spells to effect cures and curses. A root doctor. Dr. Buzzard, the root doctor, whom people other places call the voodoo man. Dr. Buzzard could put curses on people, take curses off people, or even reverse curses. All rootworkers now in Sapelo go by the name “Doctor Buzzard.” Ex. “We believed in the healing properties of the earth and all forms of the supernatural, and we believed in God, Dr. Buzzard and the Bolito Man.” Ch. Dayclean, pg 7 [Sharon Mitchell]. Day Clean, pg. 8

[Carolina Ferro] Ex: “Dr. Buzzard was the root doctor. The conjurer. The worker of black magic. He could put a spell on you and do bodily harm. He could lift a spell off you.” Ch. 19. p. 187 [Gale Skipworth, Andrew Lettich & Nickesha Thompson]

dog finger (n.s.) /dɔɡ fiŋər/ : the index finger of a person’s hand, used to place "curses" on people, by wagging the finger back and forth. Walker Bailey does not know where the origin for the phrase "Dog Finger." This is the finger that older people on Sapelo use for cursing.
Ex: “Every time Papa would make Grandma mad, she would curse Papa and wag her finger at him. And it wasn’t just any finger either - it was the pointer finger, the one next to her thumb, and we called it ‘the dog finger’ - the finger you use to curse somebody.” “The dog finger is the finger the old people used for cursing.”
Chapter 17, page 170 [Andrew Lettich & Lyschel Davis]

Down on Sapelo /dən ən səpə lə/ n a song made up by Ronnister Johnson
EX: “A song [Ronnister Johnson] made up that had lines like, ‘No policeman you will meet, you drive your Tin Lizzie nine miles on the beach.” Ch 28, pg 293 [Muriel Lange]

draggers /dræɡərs/ noun: old shoes that have had the heel cut off and used thereafter for fishing. Ex: That week he picked up all of his old shoes, the ones we call “draggers.” Ch 24, pg. 230 [Merry Luong]

dream book (n.s.) /driːm bʊk/: A dream encyclopedia, or an alphabetic
catalogue of terms and symbols found in dreams corresponding to numerical values, used as potential betting numbers in the game of Bolito.  

Ex.: "It's a little, thin paperback book..and the ladies would buy one of those and keep it for life. For instance, if Aunt Mary wanted to find the number for hats, she would look in the dream book [...] if that number were thirty-two, she'd play thirty-two. So the dream book, the Sunyboy cartoon from the Pittsburgh Courier and the magnifying glass was another way to get your numbers for Bolito."  

Chapter 15, page 150 [Gale Skipworth & Lyschel Davis]

**Drums and Shadows** /drʌmz ænd ʃæ- doz/ n “A book published by the University of Georgia Press in 1940. It was written by the Savannah Unit of the Georgia Writers’ Project under the Work Progress Administration, during the Depression, and the writers had interviewed black people on the Georgia coast in the 1930s, including people on Sapelo and all of the islands.” Ch 28, pg 283 [Muriel Lange]

**duck· (ed) out**, (dʌk(kt)-aut), v, to leave  
Ex: The other guy, the one who wasn’t a deacon, “ducked out” after a while. Ch 25, pg 244 [Lynne Tanzer]

**dum·my**, (dʌm·i), n: an unintelligent person  
Ex: Miss Catherine was no “dummy,” she knew what they were saying Ch 25, pg 245 [Lynne Tanzer]

**Dun·bar Creek** /dʌnˈbær krik/ n a location off the coast of Georgia on St. Simons  
Ex: “the Ibos were spoken for, so the ship sailed straight to the coast of Georgia, to Dunbar Creek on St. Simons Ch 28, pg 280 [Muriel Lange]

**Dup·lin**, (Dʌp·lən), n, community on Sapelo Island, Georgia  
Ex: Put Miss Mary and Mr. Eddie in his truck and drove them to Kenan Field, to the “Duplin.” Ch 26, pg 256 [Lynne Tanzer]

**dusk dark** (adj.) /dʌsk dɑrk/: time period when night is coming and day is leaving. Sunset. It was just after sunset at the time the old people called dusk dark and which even today is a time of day some people in Africa consider sacred. Ch.1, pg. 17 [Carolina Ferro], [Sharon Mitchell].

**The Eastern Stars** /θə is·tərn stɑrs/ proper noun: an order of black Masons on Sapelo who aided in the preparations of a corpse for burial and usually are the ones who laid the body on the cooling board, bathe it, and dress it for the funeral. Ex: “The Eastern Stars” helped with burial preparations back then. Ch 24, pg 231[Merry Luong]

**E·grets** /ˈɛgrɛts\ (n.pl.): 1. type of bird  
“She loved that marsh smell and the sun shining on the green sea grass and the beautiful white egrets flying overhead.” Ch. 21, p. 209) [Francesca Harris]

‘em, (əm), pron: contraction of “them”  
EX: “I woulda seen ‘em if they was.” Ch 25, pg 248 [Lynne Tanzer]

**eye·balled** (v.) aIbd inflected forms—eyeballing, eyeball: To look at intensely. Ex:”Mama didn't dance, Mama didn't drink-she didn't even taste her moonshine when she was making it, she just eyeballed it to see if it looked right.” Ch. 15, p. 145 [Gale Skipworth]
fan·fare, (fæn·fer), 1:v: celebration or announcement 2:n: Music A loud flourish of brass instruments, especially trumpets
Ex: Reynolds left the island in about 1962, before I went to St. Simons, but there wasn’t any “fanfare” about it. Ch 26, pg 258 [Lynne Tanzer]

fan·ners /fæn·rz/ n shallow baskets made of coiled grasses bound with strips of fiber.
Ex: In the Sea Islands, we call these baskets ‘fanners’ and in Sierra Leone, they call them “fantas” so even the name is close [Muriel Lange]

fan·tas /fæn·tæz/ n the African term for the shallow baskets made of coiled grasses bound with strips of fiber
Ex: In the Sea Islands, we call these baskets ‘fanners’ and in Sierra Leone, they call them “fantas” so even the name is close [Muriel Lange]

Far·mer’s Al·li·ance Hall (n) [farm əz laï əns hal]: an organization of black farmers and a social hall. Ex. By the early 1900s, they had formed an organization to cooperatively market their crops and built the Framer’s Alliance Hall…” Ch 6, pg 61 [Sharon Mitchell].

fev·er bush (n) [fi vər buʃ]: 1. this is a small evergreen bush. The leaves are used to make tea to lower a temperature. 2. tonic. Ex. “There’s a plant here we call the fever bush....” Ch 1, pg 11 [Sharon Mitchell].

fil·et mig·non, /fɪ lɛt miɡˌnɔn/ noun
A small, round, very choice cut of beef from the loin.
Ex: “The people working in the big house had their own dining room and good meals, not filet mignons or anything like that.” (Ch 26, pg 259)

First Sun·day (n.s.) /fɜ st sən de/: Moniker for the first Sunday in a given month, during which Communion is served at the First African Baptist Church in the Sapelo Community. See also “Communion Sunday.”
Ex: "Everyone went to Church on Communion Sunday. We called it First Sunday, the first Sunday of the month." Chapter 16, pg 159 [Gale Skipworth]

fist·bust·er (n.s.) /fɪ st bʌstər/ : A small watermelon, which did not fully grow. Called 'fistbusters' because one would have to smash open the melon with one’s first to eat the insides.
Ex: "A fistbuster is a small watermelon. They're the ones that stay out in your field and don't grow."
Ex as plural: "You hit them with your fist and they bust open and that's why they're called fistbusters."
Chapter 17, page 172 [Andrew Lettich & Lyschel Davis]

fix (n.s.) /fɪks/ : 1. A spell cast by a rootworker, used to protect an area. 2. a spell.
Ex: "Old Man Scip Bell had a little store and he kept a ‘fix’ around the door, a spell, so that if somebody broke in when he wasn't there, he would know."
Chapter 19, page 190 [Andrew Lettich & Nickesha Thompson]

fixed /fɪksd/ verb: to put an evil root, spell, or hex upon someone or gotten back at someone by putting evil root on him/her. Ex: Somebody’ “fixed” my boy. Ch 22, pg 215 [Merry Luong]

flam·beaux (n) [flæm bo]: pine torches blazing for use at night. Ex. “Their
flambeaux, we called them—and a single-shot rifle, shovels to dig a gator out its hole if they needed to, and a long pole with a big hook on the end of it to grab a gator with.” Ch. 6, pg 55 [Sharon Mitchell]

flush toil·et(s), (flʊʃ·tʊ·lʊt), n: lavatory that flushes using a handle EX: “You could get an electric pump attached to your well and have running water and indoor plumbing and flush toilets and you wouldn’t have to carry the water from outside either.” (Ch 27, p. 266) [Lynne Tanzer]

fod·der (n.) /fä-dər/: coarse food for livestock, composed of entire plants, including leaves, stalks and grain, of such forages as corn and sorghum, people considered as readily available and of little value, raw material. v. (used with object ) to feed with or as if with a fodder. “Then the leaves on the stalks were bundled and saved for fodder during the winter for your cow, if you had one. You had three plantings of sweet potatoes and then the vines became fodder too.” Ch. 4, pg.40 [Abena Agyire]

fore·head’s too wide /fɔrˈhedz tu w ard/: Slightly unattractive. Ex. “Hettie ain’t gonna get no husband. Look at her, her forehead’s too wide. Ch. 2, p. 22 [Shakasha, Diane Benjamin]

French·y (n.) /frˈIn či/: a domestication or nickname, given to someone of real or supposed French ancestry or culture. Ex. “Grandpa Gibb and Grandma Ada even called Papa ‘Frenchy’” (Ch. 9, pg. 103). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

Fresh·water Gee·chee (n) /frɛʃˈwa tər 'gi či/: African American people who lived approximately thirty miles inland from the Georgia barrier islands, near fresh water. Refer to “Geechee” entry. Ex. “Here on the Georgia islands, Saltwater Geechee was what we called ourselves, and black people who lived about thirty miles inland, around freshwater, were Freshwater Geechee.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 5 [Diane Benjamin]

friz·zled chick·ens /frɪzˈzld čɪkˈɛnz/ noun: a special breed of chickens that appear as though all of its feathers are standing up as if someone had ruffled them. These chickens were used to protect people from evil root or hexes by letting it search out evil that other people put in your yard to pick it up and eat it. Ex: She believed in seeking it out, and she believed in trying to protect her family from it, even though she didn’t have a “frizzled chicken” in her yard. Ch 22, p. 213-214 [Merry Luong]

from piddle to post (phrase) [frəm pɪdIl tu pəst]: 1. A phrase, spoken by the older people on Sapelo, meaning from “from pillar to post.” This phrase means that a cursed person will travel from place to another, never finding a moment’s rest. 2. from one place to another. EX: “So after Miss Francis put a curse on him, Mr. James Spaulding didn’t have no place to call home. He went from ‘piddle to post,’ as the old people called it, from pillar to post, just like Miss Francis said. From one place to another for the rest of his days.” Chapter 17, pages 175 [Andrew Lettich & Nickesha Thompson]
**fry bread** (n.) /'fraɪ bred/: a quick bread cooked by deep-frying.
Ex. “She cooked him some fry bread to go with [his lunch]” (Ch. 8, pg. 91).
[Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**gaiety time** (n.s.) /'ɡeɪti tɑm/ : A phrase used to describe a happy occasion. Ex: "Friday nights were gaiety time. Papa and his buddies would get their little bit of pay and they’d get together at one house or another and drink and have a good time.”
Ch. 18, p. 178 [Andrew Lettich]

**gal** (n.)/'ɡæl/: Girl or woman. Ex. “‘It was the spirits, gal,’ Grandma said.”
Ch. 5, p. 54 [Abena Agyire, Diane Benjamin]Ex: “Yeah, that gal ain’t scared of nuttin’” Ch 28, p. 295 [Muriel Lange]

**gannet** (n.) /'ɡæn ɑt/: A game bird; large birds with wingspans up to 70 inches found on the Eastern Seaboard. Ex. “Whenever the old people would see one they’d say, ‘Feasting time tonight, there’s a gannet overhead.’”
Ch. 2, p. 28 [Shakasha Davis, Diane Benjamin]

**gator** (n.) /'ɡe dɔ/: Alligator.
Ex. “He and Papa and Uncle Joe, who was Aunt Mary’s husband, and cousin Luke Walker would go gator hunting at night with their pine torches blazing . . .”
Ch. 6, p. 55 [Diane Benjamin]

**gay(er/est)**, ge(ə/est), adj/adv: happy, elated, a state of joy
EX: “She kept the gayer part of herself on the top and the serious side on the bottom and she had a likeable character, so she was hard to ignore” (Ch 25, pg 245) [Lynne Tanzer]

**Gee·chee** (adj) /'ɡi ˈcheɪ/ : The culture of African American people who lived on or around the Georgia barrier islands. Their ancestors may have been taken as slaves from the Kissi tribe who lived where the countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea converge. Word “Geezee”; specifically to distinguish oneself from the “Gullah” peoples; Similar to Gullah. Ex. “Then they passed their traditions down so successfully that many of the Geechee ways I learned as a child can be traced directly back to Africa.”Ch. Dayclean, p. 3 [Diane Benjamin] Ex: “There were no outsiders here and hadn’t been many to speak of since Geechee people first came to Sapelo.” Ch. 21, pg. 209 [Kim Cochran], Ex: “Geechee” and Gullah people were being pushed off land they’d owned since Reconstruction all through the Sea Islands. Ch 27, pg 272 [Lynne Tanzer]

**Gee·chee/Gul·lah people** /'ɡi ˈcheɪ ɡuˈlæ/ n African American s living in the Sea Islands
EX: “That as a Geechee/Gullah people, we held onto more of our cultural heritage than other African Americans were able to, because living in the Sea Islands, we were more isolated than other black people people in the United States were. It was in Africa that I learned that instead of using the Underground Railroad and going north, a lot of Geechee/Gullah people who escaped from slavery went down to Florida and joined the Native Americans there, the Seminoles. It was in Africa that I learned that the term ‘Geechee’ most likely didn’t come from the Ogeechee River in Georgia…It was in Africa that I also learned that the terms
‘Geechee’ and ‘Gullah’ were more likely to have come from there. That an African American professor by the name of Lorenzo Dow Turner was the first to point out that Geechee probably came from Kissi, pronounced “Geezee,” a tribe that lives in the area where modern Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea come together, and that it could be that Gullah came from Gola, a small tribe on the Sierra Leone-Liberian border.” Ch 29, pgs 311-2 [Muriel Lange]

**git** (v) /gt/ -- intr.: To command to go away. Ex. “Shoo, shoo. Git. Git! Carry your butt o’er there.” Ch. 6, p. 70 [Diane Benjamin]

**good bit** (adj.) /gud bɪt/: A sizable amount of something. Ex. “Grandpa went to school through third grade and that was a good bit for a black man back then.” Ch. 6, p. 56 [Shelby Clemons, Diane Benjamin]

**go·in** (adj.) /go ən/: continuing with termination or interruption. Ex. “Be careful goin’ down the road ‘cause you might see a jack-o-lantern” (Ch. 11, pg. 116). [Erika Parker]

**gon·na** (v.) /ɡə nə/: contraction for “going to.” Representation of Geeche pronunciation of SAE "going to," in the sense of “to be going to + v,” expressing future intention. intending or planning to do so, about to. *Synonyms: will*. Ex. “And Grandma says, "I ain't gonna move." Ch. 6, p. 71 [Diane Benjamin]. Ex. “Nobody was gonna come” (Ch. 14, pg. 144). [Ashley Johnston]. Ex: "Then when a child was born, the woman who dreamed about it would say, "I knowed somebody was gonna come into this world."

Chaper 15 p. 147 [Gale Skipworth]. Ex: She didn’t give me an exact number, just said to be careful because I was “gonna” have a few more and time proved her right. Ch 23, p. 226 [Merry Luong] Ex: Must have known she wasn’t “gonna” last when she came to see Terri. Ch 25, p. 250 [Lynne Tanzer]

**got·cha** (cont.) /gə ʃə/: contraction for “got you.” Ex. “In the morning, you’d put a cap on the bottle and you’d say, ‘I gotcha now,’ and you could actually hear the hag screaming in the bottle, ‘Let me out, let me out’” (Ch. 14, pg. 142). [Ashley Johnston]

**got·ta** (v) /ɡə tə/: Representation of Geeche pronunciation of SAE "to have got to + v." Must. Ex. “You gotta have some fun.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 5 [Diane Benjamin] Ex: You “gotta” hold it, you gotta hold it. Ch 25, p. 247 [Lynne Tanzer]

**grab-all** (n.) /ɡræb əl/: a shop, usu. owned by local residents, that supplies customers with a wide variety of items. Ex. “You could get anything from your staples to a bottle liniment there” (Ch. 10, pg. 106). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**grape ar·bor** /Grep ˈɑrbər / n. A place where grapes were grown, often referred to as a grape tree. Ex. “We also put in a grape arbor, though we called it a grape tree, and after the grapes grew, you could walk under the poles and pick yourself some delicious muscadine grapes.” (Ch.10 pg. 111). [Shemeria Claxton]

**grand·ba·by·ies**, (grɑnd-be·bi), n: grandchild
Ex: It was her very first “grandbaby” and she was gonna see it. Ch 25, pg 249 [Lynne Tanzer]

Grand·mas nu·bie /grænd-maz nubi/ n a trinket she used to answer questions EX: “These older people up there dancing should know something about the nubie. You remember Grandma’s nubie? The object she used to answer her questions when she was sitting there humming to herself? I was sure the nubie must have come from Africa.” Ch 29, pg 305 [Muriel Lange]

The Great Oaks /θə gret okz/ n a work of fiction written by Ben Ames. Ex: Richard Reynolds had gotten someone to write a fictional account of Sapelo’s history, about a slaveholder who’d beaten his wife went out on horseback, Bilali followed him and the slaveholder’s horse was found but he was never seen again. Ch 28, pg 286 [Muriel Lange]

green (adj) /gri:n/: Not hard, dry, or overripe; delicious to eat. Ex. “By green I mean fresh, not the color green.” Ch. 4, p. 40 [Diane Benjamin]

ground a hurdy-gurdy. b. To produce or process by turning a crank: grinding a pound of beef. 6. To produce mechanically or without inspiration: The factory grinds out a uniform product.

7. To instill or teach by persistent repetition: ground the truth into their heads. v.intr. 1. To perform the operation of grinding something. 2. To become crushed, pulverized, or powdered by friction. 3. To move with noisy friction; grate: a train grinding along rusty rails.

4. Informal To devote oneself to study or work: grinding for a test; grinding away at housework. Ex: “she grind that glass up and every other day she’d give him some of it and then he’d say his stomach hurt , and she’d give him some of it and then he’d say […] she’d prepare herself and that made his stomach feel good.” (Chap 26, pg 253).

gri·ot (n.)/gri ɔt/: In African tradition, the person that keeps the oral history of the tribe. A storyteller. Ex. “They are a storyteller in charge of remembering everything.” Ch. 30, p. 324 [Kandis Hutcherson, Diane Benjamin]

grip (n.s.) /grIp/ inflected form(s)—gripped, gripping: 1. A bag or carrying device, described as being similar in appearance to an old-fashioned doctor's bag but slightly larger. 2. a bag

Ex: "When papa couldn't take things no more, when he had to leave or he was gonna open his mouth to buckra and get his whole family in trouble, he would pack his grip, his little black grip that looked like a doctor's bag of old, but was a little bigger.” Ch. 18, page 186 [Andrew Lettich & Nickesha Thompson]

Gul·lah (adj) /gʌ lə/: Describing the culture of African American people who lived on or around the South Carolina
barrier islands. Their ancestors may have been taken as slaves from the Gola tribe who lived near the Sierra Leone--Liberia border, and Guinea converge. Similar to Geechee. Ex: “It used to be said that black people on the Georgia Sea Islands were Geechee and those on the South Carolina islands were Gullah, but there were always people in areas like Charleston who called themselves Geechee.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 4 [Diane Benjamin] Ex: Geechee and “Gullah” people were being pushed off land they’d owned since Reconstruction all through the Sea Islands. Ch 27, pg 272 [Lynne Tanzer]

**had a fit,** (hæd·æ·fɪt), v: to throw a tantrum. Ex: Grandma and some of the old people “had a fit.” Ch 26, pg 256 [Lynne Tanzer]

**Hag** (n.) /hæg/: a supernatural being, sometimes described as an evil old lady, that would come in the dead of night and sap the strength from her victims by riding their backs; also referred to as a haint by the older generation. Walker Bailey describes the sensation like a heavy weight pushing her into her mattress; the scientists tell Sapelo residents that the sensation of the “hag” is a problem with blood pressure. Ex. “I grew up believing in that mysterious being of the night, the hag” (Ch. 14, pg. 140), Ex. “At some point in their lives, everybody had been ridden by the hag.” (Ch. 14 Pg.141). [Ashley Johnston] [Jenee Ewen], Ex: “Soon the old people said, ‘Chile, I remember when the hag would come ride me all the time.’” Ch. 21, page 212 [Kim Cochran] Ex: It pushed us into a world where it was hard to even imagine the “hag” and the jack-o’-lantern had once ruled the dark night here. Ch 27, pg 269 [Lynne Tanzer]

**haint** (n.) /hent/: see Hag. Ex. “The old people called it the ‘haint’ and the people my age said ‘hag’, but it was one and the same supernatural being whatsoever name you gave it” (Ch. 14, pg. 140). [Ashley Johnston] Also, **haints** /hents/ noun: ghost or spirit of a deceased person; variation of haunts Ex: Kids in my generation were beginning to question our beliefs in root and magic, and of course, the scientists had explained away “haints” and jack-o’-lanterns by now so things were beginning to change over here on Sapelo. Ch 22, pg. 213 [Merry Luong]

**hammock** (n) /hæmˈmɒk/: Raised ground that is higher than the surrounding swampland. Ex. “There are gorgeous beaches, winding tidal creeks, “hammocks” of raised ground that are higher than the surrounding swampland and densely wooded areas that are former fields.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 6 [Diane Benjamin]

**hand and foot** (n) /hænd ənd fʊt/: Close personal helper. Ex. “He was her hand and foot. He did everything for her and bought her everything he could to try to make up for her husband being gone.” Ch. 3, p. 32 [Diane Benjamin]

**hand-me-downs** /hænd mi daunz/ noun: things, usually clothing or shoes, that were previously owned by someone else and given to away to someone else or passed down from an older person to a younger person. Ex: We always wore “hand-me-downs,” but these were darn ridiculous. Ch 22, pg. 216 [Merry Luong]
hands skilled /hædz skIld/ v The term used by Spalding’s grandson as an attribute to describe slaves
EX: “…his grandson described as hand skilled in the management of labor.” Ch 28, pg 286 [Muriel Lange]

**Hog Hammock,** (hag·hæmak), n: community in McIntosh County, GA
Ex: Mr. Minus drove and came to “Hog Hammock” to visit someone. Ch 26, pg 255 [Lynne Tanzer]

hol·y hell, (hol·i-hʊl), v, a hard time, trouble
She and Richard Reynolds didn’t have too much of a honeymoon period before she started giving him “holy hell” and walking around with a six-inch dagger at her waist. Ch 26, pg 259 and 260 [Lynne Tanzer]

**Hang’ing Bull** (n.) /'hen iŋ bUl/: an old slave community where slaves were hanged. Settlement on the west side of Sapelo Island that became depopulated as people moved away from the old slave communities. It persisted longer than some of the other communities because the First African Baptist Church was there and also because elderly people lived there. Ex. “On the west side of the island, people moved away from Bourbon Field, and Hanging Bull dwindled and died.” Ch. 5, p. 49 [Diane Benjamin] Ex. “Everytime Grandma or her cousin, Cousin Annie, would hear of a terrible injustice against black people anywhere, they would start in on how evil buckra was and would say ‘Yeah, we had something like that happen on Sapelo when they hung that young man down at Hanging Bull’” (Ch. 13, pg. 136). [Ashley Johnston]

**hard words** /hard wɔrds/ noun: exchange of insulting or hurtful words or a conversation that was harsh between two people in conflict or an argument.
Ex: He went and apologized to his sister-in-law, Miss Frances, because they had had some “hard words,” so he made peace with her and with anybody else he might have done some wrong to. Ch 24, pg. 230 [Merry Luong]

har·vest time /harv as taim/ n. The time or period when crops are cultivated.
Ex. “It’s a deep drainage ditch running across the island and it probably was built so that the rice in nearby fields wouldn’t be underwater at harvest time.” (Ch.10 pg. 113). [Shemeria Claxton]

head buzzard (n.s.) /hed bəzd/: Referred to as the King Buzzard in the book, the head buzzard is the leader of buzzards. It tastes prey, and determines if it is good enough to eat or not. According to legend, a head buzzard can eat a poisoned prey, and not die. One performer in the Buzzard Lope plays the head buzzard. Ex: “The head buzzard tastes the prey and sees whether it's worth eating or not, sees if it's poisoned or not.” Chapter 18, page 181 [Andrew Lettich]

head driv·er /hed draivr/ n person in charge of a group of slaves who administers punishment.
EX: “The head driver, whether he was white or black, was usually the one who whipped the other slaves and there’s nothing to say that Bilali did not do that.” Ch 28, pg 287 [Muriel Lange]

heavy set, (həv·i·sɛt), adj: overweight
Ex: When a nurse came in, a kinda “heavy set” lady with her white, starched
High John the Conqueror (n.s.) [həl ıŋ ˈdɛn ˈkənˌkərər]: A type of root used in Sapelo, acquired by mail. Used in love problems. 
*Ex:* "Some of his roots grew on the island. He got other roots and powders mail order, from an outfit in Chicago and one in Atlanta. I know he got his High John the Conqueror Root and Little John by mail."
Chapter 19, page 189 [Andrew Lettich]

Hilˈton Head, (hɪlˈton-hed), n: Island off the coast of South Carolina
*Ex:* Fancy new developments could be builtin places like “Hilton Head” and Daufauski Island in South Carolina. Ch 27, pg 272 [Lynne Tanzer]

Hog Hamˈmock (n.) /ˈhɔɡ ˈhæm ˈmɔk/: A city in McIntosh County Georgia. African American community in the southern half of Sapelo Island which was more populous than Raccoon Bluff. 
*Ex.* “I didn't know much about the community of Hog Hammock then, and the Bluff was the biggest thing I had ever seen.” Ch. 6, p. 60 [Diane Benjamin] 
*Ex.* “There was a certain group of Hog Hammock girls who thought they were special because their parents had the ‘better’ jobs on the island and got a little extra money in their paycheck” (Ch. 12, pg. 127). [Erika Parker] 

holˈy hell, (həlˈi-ˈhel), v, a hard time, trouble. 
*Ex.* She and Richard Reynolds didn’t have too much of a honeymoon period before she started giving him “holy hell” and walking around with a six-inch dagger at her waist. Ch 26, pg 259 and 260 [Lynne Tanzer]

hoodoo (n) /ˈhə duː/: Voodoo, black magic Ex. “Mama believed in root, in mojo, in what people other places call hoodoo or voodoo.” Ch. 2, p. 24 [Diane Benjamin]

hook, line, and sinkˈer /ˈhək ˈlīn ənd ˈsɪŋkər/ verb phrase: phrase that derives from fishing technique of bait on the hook, throw the line, and let it sink to catch fish; means there is a guaranteed catch. 
*Ex:* She believed him “hook, line, and sinker” and Asberry milked it for all it was worth. Ch 22, pg. 214 [Merry Luong]

hoot (v.) /ˈhət/: to lack in worth. 
*Ex.* “At nighttime his nerves of steel went away and he wasn’t worth a hoot” (Ch. 11, pg. 117). [Erika Parker]

Iˈbos /aiˈbos/ n An African tribe from southeastern Nigeria. Ibos were considered a rebellious and unruly people and there were stories of Ibos’ taking their own lives rather than submitting to slavery 
*Ex:* “A slave trader had a ship loaded with Africans from the Ibo tribe in southeastern Nigeria, sitting in a harbor in Africa, waiting for someone to buy its human cargo, when three Georgia planters agreed to the purchase…” Ch 28, pg 280 [Muriel Lange]

Iˈboˈs Landˈing /aiˈboʊz lændɪŋ/ n The term used for the event and location of the Ibo’s landing to nearby Dunbar Creek, close to St. Simon’s 
*Ex:* “What really got me started was hearing about the Ibos and Ibo’s Landing back when I was living in St. Simon’s.
There is a spiritual that says “Before I’ll be a slave, I’ll be buried in my grave, And go home to my Lord and be saved…Many Ibos broke free once they offloaded and walked straight into the water, like they were going to walk back to Africa…” Ch 28, pg 280 [Muriel Lange]

**inside out** (adj.) /In said aut/: changed from one manner or form into a totally different manner or form. Ex. “What ‘inside out’ meant was that the hag had changed from one thing into something else, like by day, the hag was a little old lady sitting in a rocking chair shelling red peas, and at night she became totally different” (Ch. 14, pg. 141). [Ashley Johnston] also, the act of transforming from one being into another. Ex. “Mama said the hag was an evil old lady turned inside out, an ugly old lady turned inside out.” (Ch. 14 Pg. 142). [Jenee Ewen]

**Jack-of-all-trades** (n.) /ˈdʒæk-əl trədз/: a self-sufficient man who is skilled in diverse areas and skills. Ex. “A man had to do everything, and they should could say that of Papa. ‘Yeah, he’s a regular Jack-of-all-trades, alright’” (Ch. 8, pg. 90). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**Jack-O-Lantern** (n)/ˈdʒæk-ə-ˈlæn tɔrn/: A mysterious ball of light usually seen in the forest at night that confuses people and gets them lost. Scientists later informed Sapelo residents that it was a naturally occurring phenomena in low-lying swampy areas of glowing gasses. Ex: “We had the jack-o’ lantern over here, see, and by that, I don’t mean the jack-o’-lantern we saw pictures of in books at school, the pumpkin with a cutout face and a candle down in it that became a light” (Ch. 11, pg. 116). [Erika Parker]. Ex: “It was never a jack-o’-lantern at all.” Ch. 21, page 211 [Kim Cochran] also, 2. Origins of this term come from Irish folklore tales of a thief named Stingy Jack who stole from a village, encountered the devil who had come to take his soul, and tempted the devil into stealing the souls of the villagers instead. Jack tricked the devil to change into a coin and jumped into Jack’s pocket but inside the pocket was a cross that stripped the devil of his powers and trapped him. The devil had to promise to not kill him and take his soul to be released. When Jack died, he could not go to heaven but the devil could not take his soul, so he became destined to wander earth. When he asked how he would see where he would go, the devil mockingly threw a hell’s ember at him and he took it and carved out a turnip and placed it inside to use as a lantern. Ex: Kids in my generation were beginning to question our beliefs in root and magic, and of course, the scientists had explained away haints and “jack-o’-lanterns” by now so things were beginning to change here on Sapelo. Ch 22, pg. 213 [Merry Luong]

**jest** (n) /ˈjest/: an act intended to provoke laughter, a witty remark. Ex. “He said it in jest and everyone laughed, but to hear Ronnister who couldn’t read and stand up and say, ‘Yall stay in school and make sump’n of yourself,’ it stuck with you”
jis (adj.) /dʒɪs/: dialectal variation of the word just. Also, In short or limited quantity. Synonyms: only, just. Ex. “Boil them jis a bit” (Ch. 8, pg. 84). [Jeanne L. Bohannon] [Kris Goodall]

jit·t·ery, (jɪt·ər·ɪ), adj: to show physical signs of being worried or nervous Ex: He was a little “jittery” about that too. Ch 25, pg 246 [Lynne Tanzer]

Ke·n·an Field, (ki·n·æn·fild), n: upland marsh site on Sapelo Island Ex: Put Miss Mary and Mr. Eddie in his truck and drove them to “Kenan Field” Ch 26, pg 256 [Lynne Tanzer]

ju·ju (n.s.) /juˈjuː/: 1. An African voodoo term for an evil spirit. 2. an evil spirit. 3. the magic attributed to or associated with juju. Ex: "In African voodoo was ‘wudu,’ ‘juju’ was an evil spirit, and ‘wanga’ was a charm." "In Africa juju was an evil spirit." Chapter 19, page 190 [Andrew Lettich & Nickesha Thompson]

just a-hoeing (transitive verb) /ˈjʌst- ˈhō(-ə)-iŋ/: work using a hoe: continuously or non-stop. Ex. He was just a-hoeing and not paying a bit of attention Ch.6, pg. 57 [Shelby Clemons]

Kis·si (n) /ˈɡiː zi/: West African tribe who lived where the countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea converge. Ex. “As to the labels "Geechee" and "Gullah," there's a line of thinking that they came from two neighboring tribes in West Africa--the Kissi, pronounced "Geezee," who lived where the modern-day countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea converge; and the G" Ch. Dayclean, p. 4 [Diane Benjamin]

kitt·ty-by-the-door (interj) /ˈkɪt di ˈbɑr dər/: Completely finished with something. Ex. “He bawled his heart out and then as he said about things, with the words rolling out fast, it was "kitty-byth'do'r." Kitty-by-the-door. Like a cat streaking out a cracked door.” Ch. 4, p. 42 [Diane Benjamin], EX: “Papa put it their own house, they’d say “I'll see you tomorrow if life lasts, and God's willing.” Ch 24, pg. 228 [Merry Luong]
all behind him like he did everything else. It was “kitty-by-th’door” to him.” (CH 27, pg 271) [Lynne Tanzer]

Ko'ran /kə-rən/ n A sacred book of Islam that contains revelations made to Muhammad by Allah
EX: “Where there were Muslim communities in that part of Africa, they made sure that their children learned sections of the Koran…” Ch. 28, pg 287 [Muriel Lange]

Kri'o /kri-o/ n blend of English and African languages.
EX: “They call it Krio, and it’s a blend of English and African languages passed down by the descendants of freed black people who returned to Sierra Leone from the United States and Jamaica. Ch 29, pg 302 [Muriel Lange]

lem'me (v.) /le mi/: Variation of phrase “let me,” to allow or permit
Ex. “Lemme tell ya’, Mama been dead and that grass ain’t dead yet” (Ch. 12, pg.123). [Erika Parker]

let up, (let· up), v: to stop
EX: “…when (the rain) began to let up, she said to Sug…” (Ch25, pg 241) [Lynne Tanzer]

li·ba·tion /lai-be-shan/ n drink
EX: “We got off the bus and started mingling with the people and the paramount chief was pouring a libation to the north, east, south, and west.” Ch 29, pg 301 [Muriel Lange]

lick (n) /lik/: A blow, as when a child is struck by a strap by an adult as punishment. Ex. “But I couldn't get my words out fast enough, I stuttered, so Grandpa went and he got his leather strap and he gave me a couple of nice licks with it.” Ch. 6, p. 69 [Diane Benjamin]

Life Everlasting (n.s.) /læf
ɛvəlæstiŋ/: 1. a plant with small leaves that turn a gray-silver tone with small white blossoms in the fall, when it is ready for harvest; it is used to make a tea after being dried, and the tea was believed in the “old days” to help lead to long life. 2. form of tea, hasting little leaves that you boil.
Ex: “Papa drank Life Everlasting too and he drank it more than Mama.” “He lived by them, he followed all of the old ways, starting with the herb—he’d brew some and drink a cup every day. Life Everlasting.”
Chapter 20, page 202 [Kim Cochran & Francesca Harris]

Little John (n.s.) /lItl ʃan/: A type of root used in Sapelo, and sent by mail. Used for love potency problems. "Some of his roots grew on the island. He got other roots and powders mail order, from an outfit in Chicago and one in Atlanta. I know he got his High John the Conqueror Root and Little John by mail."
Chapter 19, page 189 [Andrew Lettich]

limbed /lImd/v. Process of gathering and organizing parts of a tree or plant
EX. “Then he limbed them up and cut them into lengths and took his log roller and rolled them off.” (Ch.10 pg. 110). [Shemeria Claxton]

log rol·ler (n.) /log 'rol ər/: wooden pole with a hook used for rolling away felled, sectioned trees.
Ex. “He took his log roller and rolled [the sectioned logs] off” (Ch. 10, pg. 110). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**long-stap·led** (adj) /lɒŋ 'step əld/: characterized by extra long fibers, as in long-stapled cotton.
Ex. “It was long-stapled, so the fibers were extra long, and it was the finest and softest cotton there was” (Ch. 13, pg. 131). [Ashley Johnston]

**look like**, (luk· laik), v: to bear a physical resemblance to; colloquialism for “looks like”
Ex: Frank, that “look like” it strike something on Sapelo. Ch 25, pg 241 [Lynne Tanzer]

**look·in'** (luk·ən), v. a pronunciation of “looking”
EX: “She’s already lookin’ at the world.” (Ch 25, pg 247) [Lynne Tanzer]

**Lum·ber Land·ing** (n) /ləm bə 'læn dəŋ/: One of five small African American communities on the west side and north end of Sapelo Island.
Ex. “There were five small black communities over here then, Belle Marsh, Raccoon Bluff, Lumber Landing, Shell Hammock and Hog Hammock.” Ch. 1, p. 10 [Diane Benjamin], Ex: Then “Lumber Landing” closed in 1956. [Lynne Tanzer]

**lucky weed** /lɒk·i wid/: noun: also known as a coral bean, this plant lives in tropical and subtropical areas and is deep green and busty. It grows to an average of four feet or higher and has bright red seeds. It is believed to be a lucky or to bring good fortune plant. Ex: Cut down “lucky weed” ad you’re on the verge of a spanking. plural: lucky weeds Ch 22, pg 214 [Merry Luong]

**make it**, (mek·It), v: to survive’
Ex: Frank ignored the talk but he was worried about whether his mama was gonna “make it.” Ch 25, pg 246 [Lynne Tanzer]

**ma·ma**, (ma·mə), n: informal way of saying mother
Ex: Sug was on the porch and she saw the lightning hit her “mama.” (Ch 25, pg 241) [Lynne Tanzer]

**ma·ny** a (adj.) /me ni ʌ /: More than one of something, multiple. Ex. “She said, ‘Yep, I saved her behind from gettin’ many a beatin’ by doing her work.” Ch. 6, p. 68 [Shelby Clemons, Diane Benjamin]

**marsh** (n.) /mærʃ/ – grass Ch.2, pg. 27
Ex. I Mama had been there; we never would have gotten from the house to the marsh with that casket without her missing us, because she would call at regular intervals. [Shakasha Davis]

**Marsh land·ing dock**, (mær·ʃ-lænd·In), a certain landing pier for the boats on Sapelo Island
Ex: So the guards were stationed on the mainland, at Meridain Dock, and on Sapelo, at “Marsh Landing Dock,” to try and keep someone from slipping over) Ch 26, pg 260 [Lynne Tanzer]

**mar·shy** (adj.): /mɑr·ʃi/ of the marsh; used by Walker Bailey’s mother to describe the smell emanating from the water near their original home at Belle March
Ex: “‘Smell that marsh, it smell so marshy.’” Ch. 21, p. 209 [Kim Cochran]
mat·ey (n) /ˈme di/: Husband, spouse. “She was going home to John, to her matey.” Ch. 5, p. 46 [Diane Benjamin]

men·folks (pl n.) /ˈmɛn foks/: Adult males in general, men of a family or community. Plural form only. Ex. “That didn’t seem to bother the menfolks; actually, it probably just intrigued them. They loved to sit there and drink and talk, but they tried their best not to fall to sleep when they stopped at Mama Lizzie’s.” Ch. 4, p. 41 [Abena Agyire, Diane Benjamin] Ex. “The men would go there and sit and talk and drink, and some women would too, but the menfolks couldn’t stay away” Ch. 19, page 192 [Francesca Harris] Ex: The “menfolks” would slip outside and take them a little drink sometimes, and then they’d come back in and reminisce. Ch 24, pg. 233 [Merry Luong]

mess·in’ (v.) [mɛs ˈɪn]: diminutive for “messing,” to fiddle, to cause or make a mess, to play in a disorganized manner Ex: "Stay out of that water, stay out of that water, y'all messing around in that water." Chapter 16, page 166 [Gale Skipworth]

Mer·i·dian dock, (mər I-dən dok), n, a landing pier for the boats on the community of Meridian, GA Ex: So the guards were stationed on the mainland, at “Meridain Dock.” Ch 26, p. 260 [Lynne Tanzer]

mid·wife /mld·wai/ noun: term used to refer to usually women in small communities who aided in births. Ex: Frank had some family ties from the North End—Miss Rosa Jean Walker the Bluff was his grandmother and Katie Brown, the “midwife,” was his great grandmother—he was steady and I could trust him. Ch 23, pg. 225 [Merry Luong]

milk·ed it /milk·d ɪt/ verb phrase: phrase that derives from the physical act of milking an animal and is used to mean that someone is taking advantage of a situation by exaggeration or acting. Ex: She believed him hook, line and sinker and Asberry “milked it” for all it was worth. Ch 22, pg 214 [Merry Luong]

mir·ror, (mɪˈrər)n: shiny, reflective surface thought to be dangerous as it draws lightning inside of rooms Ex: She believed that the shiny surface of a “mirror” can draw lightning Ch 25, p. 240 [Lynne Tanzer]

mo' (adj) [mə]: diminutive for “more,” meaning in greater quantity, amount, measure, degree, or number Ex: "You got mo' mouth than a po' horse got behind." Chapter 18, page 184 [Andrew Lettich], Ex: Baby, you can have “mo'” chirren so be careful. Ch 23, pg. 226 [Merry Luong]

Mike and Char·lie (n) /maɪk ənd ˈʃɑr lɪ/: A person's two feet. Ex. “The only thing we had left was Mike and Charlie--our right foot and our left foot.” Ch. 4, p. 43 [Diane Benjamin]

Mo·ham·me·dan (adj.) /moˈhæ mə dən/: Muslim. Ex. “Bilali was Mohammedan, a Muslim, and he had a little mat that he used to kneel on, and he would bow to the sun and pray three times a day, when the sun came up, when it went directly overhead, and when it set” (Ch. 13, pg.134). [Ashley Johnston]
Mo·ham·me·dan Man·ding·os /mo-ham-ma-don män-ding-goz/ n a group of persons from the Niger River Valley of Africa
EX: “The Mohammedan Mandingos, who lived in the upper Niger River Valley [of Africa] like to give their children names that were Islamic or came from the Old Testament and New Testament and were found in the Koran.” Ch 28, pg 290 [Muriel Lange]

mo·jo (n) /mo jo/: Voodoo, black magic. See root. Traveled with enslaved Africans to Sapelo; term adopted in reference to the “mysterious roots and herbs Dr. Buzzard used” Synonym: voodoo, root Ex. “Mama believed in root, in mojo, in what people other places call hooDoO or voodoo.” Ch. 2, p. 24 [Diane Benjamin] Ex: “He would have seen peculiar things happen that he couldn’t explain away except for mojo” Chapter 19, page 194 [Kim Cochran]

mom, /mam/, n, most commonly used American word for “mother”
EX: “…she had she had moved back and was living with her mom and dad at Racoon Bluff.” (Ch 255, pg 255) [Lynne Tanzer]

moon·shine (n.) /mun šam/: Informal, smuggled or illicitly distilled liquor, esp. corn liquor as illegally distilled chiefly in rural areas of the southern U.S. product of illegal manufacture, will usually contain a high alcoholic content. The name referred to the habit of the still proprietors and suppliers to work at night to avoid detection by the law. 2. Whiskey illegally distilled from a corn mash. Ex: “’Mama didn’t dance, Mama didn’t drink—she didn’t even taste her moonshine when she was making it, she just eyeballed it to see if it looked right.” Chapter 15, page 145 [Gale Skipworth & Khalia Handly], Ex: If you had any “moonshine” (and) he got people arrested for it. Ch 26, pg 262 [Lynne Tanzer]

more than one way to skin a cat /mor ən wən we tu skIn e kæt/ phrase: phrase indicating that there are several ways to solve a problem or get what you want. Ex: They also said there was “more than one way to skin a cat.” Ch 23, pg 226 [Merry Luong]

mother dust /ma-thər dəst/ n mother earth. Ex: “…a long time ago the entire funeral procession would stop at the graveyard gate and ask permission from the spirits to enter to bury their loved one in the ‘mother dust’”. Ch 28, pg 284 [Muriel Lange]

mother of the church (p.n.s.) /mʌðər ʌv ə dʒɜː/ An unofficial rank in the church on Sapelo. The Mother of the Church helps to teach new members, usually children, the rules of the church. Ex: “The mother of the church always had an eye on young people to make sure you were behaving right.” Chapter 17, page 173 [Andrew Lettich] Ex. “There was one other use for your corn too. Moonshine. Everybody here made their own moonshine then.” Ch. 4, p. 41 [Abena Agyire, Diane Benjamin]

mud cloth /mʌd kloθ/ n a heavy close-woven cloth of natural fibers that is almost a tan color
EX: “The cloth in the robe was what is called mud cloth, a heavy, close-woven cloth of natural fibers that is almost a tan color, and it is so strong it could easily
last for a hundred years. It’s plain but you can imagine the hands that made it and it’s just as regal as any robe a king or queen ever wore.” Ch 29, pg 309 [Muriel Lange]

**Muezzin** /mU-əz-zIn/ n the crier who calls the faithful to prayer
EX: It’s said that Bilali means “the first muezzin,” the son of Ali, who was the son of Mohammed. Muezzin means ‘the crier who calls the faithful to prayer,’ and Bilali definitely was that.” Ch 28, pg 290 [Muriel Lange]

**Mulatto Rice** /mu-lə-to rais/ n a rice dish made on Sapelo
EX: “Rice with just enough tomatoes to change the color a little bit.” Ch 28, p. 282 [Muriel Lange]

**mullein** (n.s.) /mʊlɪn/: “a plant with big, light green fuzzy leaves” used to make a “poultice” to apply around an injured body part that had swollen
Ex: “Mullein, that’s a plant with big, light green fuzzy leaves, and you’d make a poultice and put it around the leg” Chapter 20, page 201 [Kim Cochran & Francesca Harris]

**mullet nets** (n.) /ˈmʌlət nɛts/: cast nets used for catching large mullet or trout.
Ex. “Mullet nets are the quickest to make because they’ve got two-inch mesh. They’re for catching big mullet and trout” (Ch. 8, pg.86). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**Muslim** /maz-əlɪm/ n a adherent of Islam. Ex: “…but it wasn’t unusual for a Muslim to be able to read at that time. Where there were Muslim communities in that part of Africa, they (referring to Bilali) made sure that their children learned sections of the Koran and were introduced to Arabic grammar.” Ch 28, pg 287 [Muriel Lange]

**naw**, (na), v: expressing disapproval
Ex: Frank just looked at me, like “Naw.” Ch 25, pg 249 [Lynne Tanzer]

**never die** /nev-r dai/ n the West African term for the Life Everlasting plant
EX: “So Life Everlasting grows in West Africa. The only difference is that people there call the plant ‘never die.’” Ch 30, pg. 327 [Muriel Lange]

**Ni-a** /ni-a/ n a shortened version or nickname of Cornelia
EX: “Nia, as I sometimes am called, means ‘she who has a purpose.’” Ch. 28, pg 291 [Muriel Lange]

**nicks** /nɪks/ noun: small minor cuts. Ex: I could see little “nicks,” nothing real bad, but little nicks on his feet that the crabs had made and I knew he had died before the crabs found him but it bothered me just the same. Ch 24, pg 232 [Merry Luong]

**no-manners** (adj.) /no-ˈmænərs/: used to describe someone without class or respect.
*Synonyms:* rude, disrespectful
Ex: “‘You no-manners wretch, you pass me by without speakin’.”
Chapter 17, page 170 [Andrew Lettich]

**nu-bie** (n) /ˈnu bɪː/ An object on a piece of string that one uses to divine answers to questions, a talisman kept on one’s person. Ex. “I never knew how it got its name, but the nubie is an object on a piece of string that you use to divine answers to your questions.” Ch. 6, p. 65 [Diane Benjamin] Ex. “Whenever you’d see Grandma, you knew she had her
nubie with her.” Ch. 6, p. 65 [Shelby Clemons]


**nuttun’** (n.) /ˈnʌt ən/: Representation of Geechee pronunciation of SAE “nothing,” not anything. Ex. “No, sir, Papa, I don’t see nuttun’.” Ch. 1, p. 18 [Diane Benjamin] Ex. “It had nuttin’ to do with that moonshine. It was the spirits.” Ch. 5, p. 54 [Abena Agyire]

**o’er** (adv.) /ˈɔr/: Across, beyond, in the direction of. Ex. “Carry your butt o’er there.” Ch. 6, p. 70 [Shelby Clemons, Diane Benjamin]

**old mash barrel** (adj., n.s.) /oʊld mæʃ ˈbɛərl/: a mash barrel was a container with many uses in the fields of agriculture, transportation, or industry but also frequently used to make moonshine. As an adjective, a phrase used to negatively describe the smell of a person, especially one who has been drinking heavily. See also “moonshine.” Ex: “Mama knew why he was angry. She just didn’t like his drinking and she’d say, ‘Oh, you smell like an old mash barrel. Look at you.’” Chapter 18, page 184 [Andrew Lettich & Kim Cochran]

**ol’lard** (n.) /ˈoʊ lɔrd/: a type of butter spread; render fat from a hog Ch.3, pg.33 Ex. You buy me o’lard [Shakasha Davis]

**on the outs**, (an-θ-auts), in a precarious position Ex: “The guy was on the outs with another one of Reynolds higher-ups and when someone on the island complained about him to Reynolds, Reynolds fired him.” (Ch 26, pg 259)[Lynne Tanzer]

**other side** (n) /ˈʌðə sɪd/: Georgia mainland, a 6.5 mile boat journey away from Sapelo Island. Ex. “Then they rode six and one-half miles over the water to Meridian Dock on "the other side," which is what we all call the Georgia mainland.” Ch. 1, p. 10 [Diane Benjamin]

**out it**, (aut It), v, the action of stopping something Ex: “…cause that fire was too hot to out it with ordinary water” (Ch 25, pg 243) [Lynne Tanzer]

**outhouse** (n.) /ˈaʊt hɔʊs/: a toilet Ex. We had a separate toilet too, what most people would call an outhouse.Ch.2, pg. 22 [Shakasha Davis]

**outside kids**, (aut said kIds), n: children conceived out of wedlock Ex: They had been condemning her for years, anyway, because Miss Catherine actually did have “outside kids.” Ch 25, pg 243 [Lynne Tanzer]

**outside** (adj) /ˈaʊt ˈsaɪd/: A child or children born out of wedlock. Ex. “. . . All the others, except Grandma, didn’t have outside children. Every child belonged to a proper husband-and-wife
team until Grandma came of age.” Ch. 5, p. 50 [Diane Benjamin]

**over a barrel**, (ovr·æ·bæ·rl), :, to have someone at your mercy
EX: “He had Coffin over a barrel because it was the Depression and he was desperate for money” (Ch 26, pg 258) [Lynne Tanzer]

**Oyster Factory** /ɒstr fækt ri/n. A place where one would shuck and can oysters so that they may be shipped off and sold. Ex. “When she was a young girl, Howard Coffin had an oyster factory at Barn Creek on the South End, in the 1920’s.” (Ch.10 pg. 112). [Shemeria Claxton]

**pageboy** [peyj-boi] (n.): a hair style in which the hair is rolled under, usually at shoulder-length. Ex. She’d wear it in a pageboy for church but for everyday she’s wear it in plaits. Ch.2, pg. 20 [Shakasha Davis] Ex: “Mamma was all dolled up; she had her hair down long in a pageboy with bangs” Chapter 15, page 156 [Francesca Harris]

**palm wine** /pahm wain/ n an alcoholic drink. Ex: “The palm wine looked and tasted exactly like the mash we used to use for making moonshine and I whispered to Lauretta Sams, ‘Don’t drink too much of that stuff. It tastes smooth and cool and I know you’re thirsty but it will get to you,’ and I sipped slowly because I knew just what it could do to you.” Ch 29, pg 309 [Muriel Lange]

**paramount chief** /par-ə-maunt chif/ n dominant, chief, sovereign
EX: “We got off the bus and started mingling with the people and the paramount chief was pouring a libation to the north, east, south, and west. Ch 29, pg 301 [Muriel Lange]

**passed**, (pæst), adj: no longer living
Ex: The hospital called Ada late one night, weeks after Terri and I had gotten home from the hospital, and said she had just “passed.” Ch 25, pg 249 [Lynne Tanzer]

**passing** /pǽs-ng/ vb 1. Move, proceed 2: to go away: also : die.
Ex: “Some of the old people I knew in my childhood were passing now and I knew that soon it was going to be even harder for us to recapture some of our history.” Ch 28, pg 283 [Muriel Lange]

**pennyroyal** (n) /peniroiCl/: a local herb used for women’s problems. Ex. “She gave Ada a soothing cup of pennyroyal tea”Ch. 7, p. 75 [Matt Eisenman]

**pis’ned** (v) [pa l’snd ] inflected forms— poison, poisoning : 1. diminutive for “poisoned,” to kill or harm with poison, which is a substance that causes injury, illness, or death, esp. in reference to chemicals. 2. poisoned, to injure or kill with poison, to treat, taint, or impregnate with or as if with poison.
Ex: “Her potions would poison you but they weren't any of the normal kind of poison that you could get your hands on. ‘Yeah, chile, I think that one may have been pis’ned[.]’” Chapter 19, page 191 [Andrew Lettich, Kim Cochran, & Francesca Harris]

**Persimmons** (n.pl.) [par-sim-mənz]: fruit, sort of fruit in the berry family. “He would bring us kid’s persimmons or wild grapes that he found while he was working or whatsoever happened to be
ripe” Chapter 18, page 185 [Francesca Harris]

**po’** (adj.) [po ] : diminutive for “poor,” meaning having little or no money, goods, or other means of support
Synonyms: impoverished, broke, underprivileged
**Ex:** ”You got mo’ mouth than a po’ horse got behind.”
Chapter 18, page 184 [Andrew Lettich]

**po’jo** (n) / po jo /: a tall blue heron.
Ex. “…And tall blue herons stalking the marsh that we called po’jo’s”
pl. **po’jo’s**. Ch. 2, p. 20 [Matt Eisenman]
Ex. “He heard the sound of something rising up and large wings flapping quick-like and a pojo’, a blue heron flew away” (Ch.11, pg.118-119). [Erika Parker]

**pomp·a·dour** /pɒmpəˈdɔːr/ noun: originally a type of haircut for men where the man’s hair is brushed straight up and back that was created by Madame Pompadour and was popular in the 1950s. It is a woman’s hairdo that involves sweeping the hair straight up from the forehead into a high, turned back roll. Ex: Miss Moore combed and styled her hair kinda like a “pompadour” on top and it sort of frizzled down in the back and she was always immaculately dressed and her shoes were always in perfect condition. Ch 23, pg 218 [Merry Luong]

**poor man’s net** (n.) /pər mænz net/: a type of cast net with one-inch mesh used to pull in most aquatic organisms for food.
Ex. “That’s what we call a poor man’s net, because that mesh is small enough to hold most things in it. If you’re really hungry, you use that net” (Ch. 8, pg. 86). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**praise house** /prez hauz/ n a church or house of prayer
**Ex:** “I want to build a praise house on our property. It will be a small, wooden praise house with little narrow benches like the ones of old, so that my grandchildren will see what a praise house is like and visitors will learn about them.” Ch 30, pg 331 [Muriel Lange]

**Po·ta·to House** /poˈte te haus/ n. A place built of lumber used to store sweet potatoes
**Ex.** “Then he used some of the other lumber to build a potato house to store the sweet potatoes in, and he gave the rest to Grandpa.” (Ch.10 pg. 110). [Shemeria Claxton]

**question** (v) /ˈkwɛstʃən /: to conference.
**Ex.** “So when they called her to conference, to question, they called it, she went.” Ch. 5, p. 51 [Matt Eisenman]

**quick-like** (adj.) /ˈkwɪkləɪk/: variation of term “quickly”. Ex. “He heard the sound of something rising up and large wings flapping quick-like and a pojo’, a blue heron flew away” (Ch. 11, pg. 118-119). [Erika Parker]

**Rac·coon Bluff** (n.) /ræ kʊn bλfl/: a small black community on the northwest end of Sapelo Island, in McIntosh County Georgia. Ex. “They then sold the tracts to seventeen other freed families who had lived on Sapelo before the war, and that was how the community of Raccoon Bluff was founded.” Ch. 5, p.49 [Matt Eisenman]
Ex. “We had waited untol after Christmas because or teacher at the Bluff, Mr. Govner O’Neil, thought that
starting a new school would be easier for us if we came in when everybody else was coming back fresh from the holidays” (Ch. 12, pg. 125). [Erika Parker]

EX: “I didn’t even know, until it closed, that the community of Raccoon Bluff had been founded by three black men after the Civil War…” Ch 28, p. 279 [Muriel Lange]

**raising the hymn** (v. phrase) /resiŋð/ inflected forms—raise, raises, raised: 1. phrase meaning the process during which a deacon in a church would read a stanza of a song, followed by the congregation's sung response, repeated in the form of a round 2. a singing routine where the congregation of a church sings directly after the deacon reads the beginning of a hymnal stanza. Ex: A deacon would “read the first stanza, and then you'd sing it behind him. As soon as the last note…the deacon picked it up and read the next stanza and so forth. And that’s called raising the hymn.”

Chapter 16, page 160 [Gale Skipworth & Lyschel Davis]

**rat** (n) /ræt/: a term that refers to either a mouse or a rat. Ex. “Grampa would set traps for mice and rats, we called them all rats, and he’d set one in the main house and one in the kitchen and one in the corn house.” Ch. 6, p. 67 [Matt Eisenman]

**red** (n.) /red/: a strongly disliked color in Sapelo for its connection to the slave trade; the color of cloths that slave traders would wave to lure curious adults and children near a boat where they could be captured and sent to America. Ex. “See, the buckra man enticed you with it, which means you were weak or silly enough to go for a piece of rd cloth and get yourself caught, so you looked silly with that red on” (Ch. 13, pg. 138). [Ashley Johnston]

**red cloth** /red kloth/ n a red cloth used to trick and capture African slaves Ex: “Not everyone was captured in the woods by British slavers or tricked by a piece of red cloth.” Ch 28, pg 285 [Muriel Lange]

**regular** (adj.) /rəg lər/: normal, in usual manner, steady. Ex. “They found him laying down right by a bunch of *briar bushes*, all curled up with one hand covering his mouth and face, and with red welts all over his skin, because the mosquitoes and gnats had been eating on him all night, they had themselves a regular feast on him, and Cousin Charles was talking out of his mind, just jabbering and muttering like he didn’t know these men at all” (Ch. 11 pg.120). [Erika Parker]

**revenuer(s)**, (rə vəˈnər əz), n: law enforcers of prohibition Ex: He liked his whiskey and he’d even send people out to tell you when the “revenuers” were coming so they never found anything. Ch 26, pg 262 [Lynne Tanzer]

**rice birds** /rais brdz/ n birds that would swoop down and feed on the rice
EX: “Papa and Mama called the ricebirds that came to Sapelo the ‘May birds’ because they would start arriving in May when the rice was planted.” Ch 29, p. 304 [Muriel Lange]

**rice cake** (n.) /rais kek/: originally a food prepared on special occasions, most likely religious days, traditionally made by washing the rice and letting it sit and swell over night, then beating it into a paste and adding honey; current version of the rice cake refers to the crusty, golden brown rice left at the bottom of a pot after cooking.
Ex. “The tradition of the rice cake got passed down, it just changed over time” (Ch. 13, pg. 135). [Ashley Johnston]

**rice fanner** (n) /rais fænə/: a large, shallow basket. Ex. “She’d put it in a large, shallow basket called a rice fanner, and shake it gently so the wind would catch the chaff and blow it off.” Ch. 6, p. 58 [Matt Eisenman]

**right mind**, (raɪt·maɪnd), n: sane
Ex: She was still in her “right mind” and she could talk Ch 25, pg 242 [Lynne Tanzer]

**ring shout** /riŋ ʃaʊt/n. A Special form of dance. Ex. He came in with his stick, an old broom handle, like you’d use for a ring shout, a special form of dance we had over here, and he’d pound that stick on the wooden floor, he’d twist his body and gyrate his hips, he’d take a few steps forward and a few steps backward, and he’d dance his heart out” (Ch.12, pgs.122-123). [Danielle Oves]
Ex: The ring shout is fading away in Africa too but it is still done in a few of the smaller villages on special occasions. Some men and women from one of the outlying villages performed a ring shout dance for us one night.” Ch 29, p. 304 [Muriel Lange]

**riptide** /ˈrip-ˈtaɪd/ noun: a very strong undertow that occurs when the east wind has been pushing on the water up toward the beach and the water builds up and it has nowhere to go because the wind is trapping it. The water eventually goes underneath the other water that is coming in and becomes very strong. Ex: Michael had gotten clams and put them on the bank to bring them home and then he decided he was going for a swim, so he went back in the water and he got caught in a “riptide” and he couldn’t get out of it. Chapter 24, pg. 235 [Merry Luong]

**root** (n) /rut/: mojo, also called hoodoo, black magic, or voodoo in Africa. Traveled with enslaved Africans to Sapelo. Ex. “She believed that someone could put root on you and could cause you bodily harm, and jealous women were known to use root.” Ch. 2, p. 24 [Matt Eisenman] ; perhaps from the African word “wudu,” also meaning voodoo; term adopted in reference to the “mysterious roots and herbs Dr. Buzzard used” Synonyms: mojo, voodoo, hoodoo
Ex: Cap’n Frank “had the fear of root in him.” “Some places called that voodoo or hoodoo but over here we mostly said ‘root’ or ‘mojo’ to refer to the mysterious roots and herbs Dr. Buzzard used” Chapter 19, page 194; Chapter 19, page 188 [Kim Cochran & Francesca Harris], Ex: Kids in my generation were beginning to question our beliefs in “root” and magic, and of course, the scientists had explained away haints and jack-o’-lanterns by now so things were beginning to change over here on Sapelo. Ch 22, pg. 213 [Merry Luong]
2. magic
Ex: He died of kidney failure, the medical records said, but it was questionable kidney failure to some people, to the ones who looked to “root” and said he had been poisoned. Ch 25, pgs 243 and 244 [Lynne Tanzer]

root doctor (n) /rut dak təː/ : a voodoo man who specializes in dealing with root, spells, hexes stemming from voodoo or black magic. Ex. “…we also believed in Dr. Buzzard, the root doctor, who people in other places call the voodoo man…”Ch. Dayclean, p. 8 [Matt Eisenman], Ex: The “root doctor” told them to bury red pepper at the back and front steps. Mama and Papa did just that – they dug a hole and buried that red pepper into the ground precisely six inches, because it was supposed to keep away evil spirits. Ch.22, p. 214-215[Merry Luong]

root workers (n.pl.) /rut wəkərs/ : people who use roots for black or white magic. On Sapelo, a rootworker may also be known as “Doctor Buzzard.” Ex: "Ever since then, root workers in the Sea Islands have been known as Dr. Buzzard and it has always been said that the ones in South Carolina have the strongest root of all." Chapter 19, page 190 [Andrew Lettich]

Rosenwald (n.) /ros ən wald/: president of company Sears Roebuck in the early 1900s. Donated monies for education for African Americans. Ex. “You may not know about Rosenwald schools but they meant a lot to black people throughout the South” (Ch. 12, pg. 125-126). [Erika Parker]

Saltwater Geechee (n) /salt wat Ɂ ɠiːɬiː/ : the traditional name of those residents of Sapelo Island. Distinguished from the “Freshwater Geechee” who live about 30 miles inland around freshwater. Ex. “Matter of fact, we’re Saltwater Geechee.” Ex. “Here on the Georgia Islands, Saltwater Geechee was what we called ourselves.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 5 [Matt Eisenman][Carolina Ferro]

Sandy Claus (n.) /sændi klaːs/: variation of name “Santa Clause,” a mythical figure said to bring presents at Christmas. Ex. “At the point where we were all singing Christmas carols and we broke into ‘Jingle Bells,’ you’d hear this jingling sound from outside the church and Sandy Claus, as we called him, would come bursting in with a sack of his back” (Ch. 12, pg.122). [Erika Parker]

Sapelo (n.) /sæpəlo/: a state-protected island located in McIntosh County, Georgia, setting for novel by Cornelia Walker Bailey, God, Dr. Buzzard and the Bolito Man. An island south of Savannah, Ga., and north of Jacksonville, Fl., in the Sea Islands. Ex. “The climate on Sapelo was hot and humid and buggy, just like it was in West Africa.” Ch. Dayclean, p. 2 [Matt Eisenman] Ex. “The Freedmen’s Bureau got a school for black students up and going on Sapelo just two months after the war” (Ch. 12, pg. 123). [Erika Parker], Ex: I happened to glance over in an easterly direction, toward where Sapelo is…” Ch 25, pg 241 [Lynne Tanzer]

savannah (n) /sə vənənəː/ : an open grassy area, like a prairie. Ex. “A savannah’s an open prairie-type area
where you can see nothing but grass and sometimes a stubby tree, and King Savannah was the biggest one around.”

Ch. 5, p. 47 [Matt Eisenman]

Sav‘an·nah, /sæv·æn·ə/, n: port of sea entry to Georgia
Ex: He was working at “Savannah” State College in public relations Ch 27, pg 275 [Lynne Tanzer]

scot-free, (skat·fri), adj: without consequence. Ex: He got away “scot-free,” and that was unfair” Ch 25, p. 245 [Lynne Tanzer]

scound·rel, /skaund·ral/, n: dishonorable,villain
EX: “He hired people who we thought were scoundrels and he didn’t look too closely at them.” (Ch 26, pg 258) [Lynne Tanzer]

Sea Is·land cot·ton (n.) /ˈsi ə laŋd ’kot ən/: a long-stapled and especially soft variety of cotton, cultivated from a seed originating the Bahamas.
Ex. “Spalding was a wealthy man, a state legislator and one of the first of the Sea Island planters to get a special kind of seed from the Bahamas and cultivate what became known as Sea Island cotton” (Ch. 13, pg. 131). [Ashley Johnston]

sed·di·ty /sed·di·tē adj sedentary
EX: We’re a bit more sedae; more ‘seddity,’ as the ole people called it when you were careful to dot your i’s and cross your t’s…” Ch 30, pg 322 [Muriel Lange]

see·king (v.) /sēk·iŋ/ inflected forms—seek, sought: to search for the will of God for the individual through prayer in a place known only to the supplicant at the direction of a spiritual guide or teacher. 2. Going out to your private place to pray.
Synonyms: questing, searching
Ex: "You have to find your own place now, a secret place, and when you go seeking, that's your own special place […] you go yourself out there and pray and talk to God."
Ex: "If I wasn't awake, Mama or Papa would wake me up when midnight came. ‘Okay, baby, time for you to go outside and go seeking.'" Chapter 16, page 164 [Gale Skipworth & Khalia Handy]

set ups /sɛt əps/ noun: another term for wakes that was used during slavery times and is similar to wakes in gathering with other people to watch over the deceased’s body. Ex: Back in slavery times, people called them “set ups” ut they were pretty much the same thing—sitting up and talking all night and watching over the body. Ch 24, pg. 232 [Merry Luong]

Se·ven Sis·ters ros·es (n.) /se vən ’slst əz ’roz əz/: a flora variety featuring clusters of usu. seven, small pink blooms or medium pink color. In Geechee, refers to the variety named for the seven daughters of Bilali.
Ex. “They’re called the seven sisters for seven daughters of Bilali” (Ch. 10, pg. 111). [Jeanne L. Bohannon], EX: “I also learned the names of all seven of Bilali’s daughters. I had known he had seven daughters, because of the Seven Sisters rose that we had over here, but now I knew them as Margaret, Bintu, Charlotte, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, and…Hester, my great-great-great grandmother. Ch 28, pg 284 [Muriel Lange]
**shad·ow** /shá·d-o/ *n* a spirit taking the form of an animal

EX: Katie Brown said she had seen a shadow, and that’s what she called a spirit that takes an animal form, and this one was one from the dark side of the afterlife.” Ch 29, pg 297 [Muriel Lange]

**Shell Ham·mock** (n) /šel hæ mæk/: a small black community on the south end of Sapelo Island. Ex. “There were five small black communities over here then, Belle Marsh, Raccoon Bluff, Lumber Landing, Shell Hammock and Hog Hammock.” Ch. 1, p. 10 [Matt Eisenman], Ex: After “Shell Hammock” closed, The Reynolds people turned the heat up on Raccoon Bluff until by 1964 everybody had left the Bluff. Ch 26, pg 261 [Lynne Tanzer]

**she·nan·i·gans** /sha·na·ni·ganz/ *n* 1: An underhand trick 2: questionable conduct – usu. Used in pl. 3: High spirited or mischievous activity – usu. Used in pl. EX: “It was his [Bi·lali’s] job to make sure the crops were planted and harvested at the right time and he wouldn’t have stood for any shenanigans.” Ch 28, pg 287 [Muriel Lange]

**shoosh** (int) /šuš/: an interjection, indicative of exasperation.

How do you tell Papa that at age five? Shoosh! The safest thing was to leave it alone or just say yes and get it over with.” Ch. 1, p. 18 [Matt Eisenman]

**shot**, (shat), *n*: injection

Ex: They gave me a “shot,” without asking if I wanted one or not. Ch 25, pg 247 [Lynne Tanzer]

**shout** (n.s) /ʃaʊt/: A term used to describe a celebration amongst a group of people. The term was used to describe the dancing of "The Buzzard Lope" in Walker Bailey’s book.

EX: “Now, the Buzzard Lope is what everyone on Sapelo called a shout, and Geechee and Gullah people on some of the other islands called a ring dance shout. By ‘shout’ I don’t mean a loud or unruly shout from your mouth. It’s more like a celebration, an organized celebration, done in a circle, to the beat of a stick, a broomstick.”

Ch. 18, page 178 [Andrew Lettich]

**shrimp net** (n.) /šrImp n/: a type of cast net with ¾ inch mesh used solely for catching shrimp.

Ex. “we call it a shrimp net, and it’s only for catching shrimp. We don’t even call it a cast net” (Ch. 8, pg. 86). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

**sick·bed**, (slk·bed), *n*: hospital bed

EX: “Her spirit left her body, left her sickbed and came to my bed because she wanted to see that grandchild.” (Ch 25, pg 249) [Lynne Tanzer]

**slap·py skin** /slæp-pi skIn/ *n* loose, sagging skin. Ex: “She’d [grandma] look in the mirror and say, ‘I look like a poor cracker, like buckra with that slappy skin,’ because her skin was getting loose, the way some white people’s skin got as they aged.” Ch 28, pg 282 [Muriel Lange]

**small heart·ed**, (smal·hart·ed), adj, lacking in compassion. Ex: It showed how “small hearted” the Reynolds people were to tell an old lady they couldn’t ride the boat anymore. Ch 26, p. 256 [Lynne Tanzer]
smoke bucket (n.s) /smɔk bækət/: a bucket filled with Spanish moss which was ignited to act as a mosquito repellant. Ex: "Then, before you'd go to bed, you'd carry that smoke bucket through the house…especially under the bed because the mosquitoes would hide there, and after that you could sleep peacefully." Chapter 15, page 150 [Gale Skipworth & Lyschel Davis]

snatches (n.) /snætʃ/: little bits of information. Ex. “Grandma would say little snatches of things that started with ‘when buckra owned us,’ so I knew my family had been slaves once,…” (Ch. 13, pg. 132). [Ashley Johnston]

soup (n.) /sup/: amalgam of various meats and vegetables based on availability, cooked and poured on rice or grits. Ex. “We had some rice and grits, but nothing to put on the rice and grits, no soup” (Ch. 8, pg. 81). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

spank·ing /spenk·ɪŋ/ noun: term for a disciplinary action that meant physical punishment and usually such punishment came in the form of smacking on the bottom or a whip to the bottom depending on the method of the parent. Ex: Cut down a lucky weed and you’re on the verge a spanking. plural spankings Ch 22, pg. 214 [Merry Luong]

spar·kle ber·ry (n) /sporkəl beri /: a wild berry with similar growth habits to the blackberry. Ex. “Kids, there’s some sparkle berries and there’s some blackberries” pl. sparkle berries Ch. 5, p. 44 [Matt Eisenman]

spir·it /spir·ət / n 1 : the animating principle : soul 2 : Holy spirit 3 : spectre, ghost EX: “She’s got the spirits walking with her. And whether the spirits were there protecting me or not, I always knew I was perfectly safe.” Ch 28, pg 295 [Muriel Lange]

spunk /spʌŋk/adj. Term used to describe someone’s personality, someone that is excited, or outgoing. Ex. “Cousin Anie was full of spunk and determination, just full of spunk and determination, but her son Charles didn’t have any spunk at all.”( Ch.11 pg. 116). [Shemeria Claxton]

St. Sim·ons /sent sain·əns/ proper noun: an island off the coast of Savannah, near Sapelo, and part of the Georgia Sea Islands. Ex: Like Sapelo, “St. Simons” is in the Georgia Sea Islands, and rice and cotton were grown there in slavery days also. Ch 23, pg. 222 [Merry Luong], 2. (sant-sai-mans), n: island off the coast of Georgia located in Glynn county, the largest of the “Golden Isles including Sea Island, Jekyll Island and Little “St. Simons” Island Ch 26, pg 254 [Lynne Tanzer]

stam·per (n.s) /stæmpər/: 1. a condition in which the afflicted party’s legs become weak and eventually unable to function walking Ex: “They’d get something we called ‘stamper’ and they’d get weak and they couldn’t walk, and we’d bury the dog.” Chapter 20, page 205 [Kim Cochran & Francesca Harris]

stand·off·ish (adj.) [stændəflɪʃ]: aloof. Synonyms: aloof, distant,
detached, unfriendly. Ex: “Some of the scientists were kinda standoffish [...]” Ch. 21, page 210 [Kim Cochran]

stap·les (n.) /ˈstep əlz/: necessary items needed for homelife.
Ex. “You could get anything from your staples to a bottle liniment there” (Ch. 10, pg. 106). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

straw boss (n.) /ˈstra bas/: 1. an intermediate manager of usu. field workers, responsible for jobs conducted and for providing workers necessary means. 2. a middle man who gathers information from workers and relays it to his boss.
Ex. “He ain’t nuttin’ but a straw boss” (Ch. 9, pg. 98). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

Stink, (stɪnk), v: chaos, trouble
Ex: “The Reynolds foundation backed off when they realized the stink it would cause to uproot us from the island.” (Ch 27, pg 275) [Lynne Tanzer]

stubbed (v.) /stʌbd/: to strike one’s foot against a fixed object.
Ex. “I had never stubbed my left foot before but I knew what to do” (Ch. 12, pg. 128). [Erika Parker]

sump’n (pron.) /ˈsʌmp n/: dialectal variety for the word something. Ex. “I know ya see sump’n.” Ch. 1, p. 18 [Matt Eisenman] Ex. “There may be sump’n to what Brer Wolf’s talking about” (Ch. 8, pg. 84). [Jeanne L. Bohannon] Ex: “You have to do sump’n about that dog.” Chapter 19, page 193 [Kim Cochran], Ex: Now, people over here believed that education was important but realistically, there weren’t any jobs over here for black people with degrees, so education wasn’t the only thing the old people meant when they said “make ‘sump’n’ of yourself.” Ch 23, pg. 226 [Merry Luong]

Sun·ny·boy (proper n.s.) /ˌsan ɪˈbɔːl/: comic strip that ran from the late 1920s into the 1970s, in the Pittsburgh Courier, featuring an African-American character named Sunny Boy, also known as Sunny Boy and Sunnyboy Sam. Sometimes used by individuals in the text to choose Bolito numbers. See also “Bolito.” Ex: The Courier had news of the black community and world news, but what Aunt Mary paid the most attention to was a comic right in the middle of the newspaper called Sunyboy. Chapter 15, page 149 [Gale Skipworth]

Sur·viv·al·isms /sər-vaiv-əl-ɪzmz/ v beliefs and practices
Ex:“beliefs and practices that had been passed down from our African Ancestors.” The Georgia Writer’s Project, for the book Drums and Shadows, were specifically looking for what they termed “survivalisms” among the inhabitants of Sapelo and neighboring islands. Ch 28, p. 283 [Muriel Lange]

sweet po·ta·to, /swit· po·ta·to/, n: a vegetable native to the tropical parts of South America. The edible tuberous root of the sweet potato vine which is grown widely in warm regions of the United States
Ex: If it rain again, the rain will water my “sweet potatoes” and I won’t have to. Ch 25, pg 241 [Lynne Tanzer]

sweet soap (n.) /swit sop/: dialectal variation used to refer to the Ivory Soap brand, manufactured since the 19th century and marketed by Proctor & Gamble Company.
Ex. “So we were inclined to pick up some of their ways quicker – even something as simple as switching to Ivory Soap, ‘sweet soap’ as we called it” (Ch. 10, pg. 113). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

sway (v) /swɪŋ/ : to cause spiritual loss or confusion Ex. “At least that’s the way everything was until the day when Grandma said the spirits ‘sway’ her head and confused her and lost her on that road.” Ch5, p. 54 [Matt Eisenman]

switch (n.) /swɪtʃ/ : a slender, flexible shoot, rod, etc., used esp. in whipping or disciplining. Ex. He grabbed Asberry’s arm and he tore his butt up with that switch. Ch.2, pg. 29 [Shakasha Davis][Matt Eisenman]

tab·by walls, (tæbi-wols), n: walls made from concrete and shells, EX: “…he made sure that every black man, woman, and child was taken to the sturdy sugar and cotton houses, where they were safe behind thick, tabby walls.” (Ch 27, pg 273) [Lynne Tanzer]

Tar·pon (proper n.s.) /tɑɾpən/: a small shrimp boat owned by the company on Sapelo Island during Cornelia Walker Bailey's childhood, the boat could hold approximately 25 people. Ex: “The company boat back then was the Tarpon, an old shrimp boat that didn’t hold more than about twenty five people at the most.” 2. (n.s.) a large silvery elongate bony fish that occurs especially in the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, and warm coastal waters of the Atlantic, reaches a length of about six feet and is often caught for sport. Chapter 15, page 156 [Gale Skipworth & Nickesha Thompson]

Ta·ta /tə-tə/ n nickname for Cornelia’s husband, Frank. Ex: My husband, Frank, has a nickname, ‘Tata,’ which we were always told was English for ‘thank you.’ ‘Tata’ was how we taught a baby to say thank you. But it turns out in some parts of Africa, ‘tata’ means ‘father’ and is used as a term of respect for addressing an elder or chief.” Ch 29, pg. 313 [Muriel Lange]

ta·ter (n.) /tu tər/: dialectal variation of the word potato. Ex. “He gather up his seed tater so he could plants his sweet potatoes” (Ch. 8, pg. 84). [Jeanne L. Bohannon]

tattle·tale /tæ təl teɪl/ v. To report someone to an authority figure with the direct intent of causing mischief; to gossip to an authority figure. Ex. “See, there were some people over here who had what we called high morals, who did not tattle·tale on their fellow man to the white man, even if they knew it was something he would want to hear.” (Ch.8 Pg.81). [Kris Goodall]

tea (n) /ti/: an alcoholic beverage, a synonym for moonshine. Ex. Grandma stayed home then except if she was out with her drinking buddies, because Grandma liked her tea, that’s for sure…” Ch. 5, p. 54 [Matt Eisenman]

the Bluff (n) /ðə bɑlf/ : the common name for Raccoon Bluff. Ex. “Everything centered around the Bluff to us.”Ch. 6, p. 60 [Matt Eisenman]

the curse (n.s.) /ðə kɜːs/ : a hex, or spell, that is placed on a person, notably more dire than simply “cussing” a person. (see also “cussing.”) Most
people on Sapelo believe in the power of curses. Walker Bailey notes that many of the women of Sapelo use curses.

Ex: “See, Grandma had a mean side to her and she did curses. I'm not talking about cussing, plain ordinary cussing. I'm talking about the curse.”

Chapter 17, page 169 [Andrew Lettich]

The Great Oaks /θə gret ɔks/ n a work of fiction written by Ben Ames.

“Richard Reynolds had gotten someone to write a fictional account of Sapelo’s history, about a slaveholder who’d beaten his wife went out on horseback, Bilali followed him and the slaveholder’s horse was found but he was never seen again.” Ch 28, pg 286 [Muriel Lange]

The Old Man (n.) /ði old mæn/: a respectful name referring to Bilali.

Ex. “I could tell by the way they said The Old Man, that it was a term of respect” (Ch. 13, pg. 132). [Ashley Johnston], Ex: I think people respected “The Old Man,” but they were afraid of him. Ch 28, pg 286 [Muriel Lange]

Thomas Spalding (n.) /ˈtəm ɑːs ˈspɔld in/: the biggest and best known plantation owner on Sapelo Island during slavery, a state legislator, and one of the first Sea Island planters to cultivate what became known as Sea Island cotton.

Ex. “She was there the day I came home telling Mama how my teacher, Miss Jessie Mae Moore, had brought a book into school and read to us about plantation days on Sapelo and Thomas Spalding” (Ch. 13, pg. 130). [Ashley Johnston]

those days (n.) /ðəʊ dez/: an all encompassing phrase referring to the days of slavery. Ex. “’Those were those days,’ Mama would say, like that was all you needed to know” (Ch. 13, pg. 139). [Ashley Johnston]

three R's /θəri ars/ noun: reference to reading, writing, and arithmetic that was believed to be the basic foundation of education. Ex: She knew you needed the “three R’s,” but no one ever said how far you needed to go beyond that. Ch 23, pg 221 [Merry Luong]

Timbo /tɪm bo/ n center of learning and the capital of Futa Jallon, in modern-day Guinea.

EX: “There’s a theory that Bilali was a student there.”Ch. 28, pg 287 [Muriel Lange]

tin lizzie /tIn lIzi/ n a vehicle

EX: from Ronnister’s song “you can drive your Tin Lizzie nine miles on the beach.” Ch 28, pg 293 [Muriel Lange]

to the hilt /tu ðə hlt/ adverb: doing something to the limit. Ex: Asberry didn’t like going to school at all so he played that root thing “to the hilt.” Ch 22, pg 215 [Merry Luong]

toddy (n.s.) /ˈtɔdɪ/ : 1. a hot alcoholic drink. 2. usually a hot drink consisting of liquor (as rum), water, sugar, and spices. Synonym: hot toddy

Ex: "He wouldn't drink then, because he took his job and stuff seriously. He wouldn't take a tooddy unless he was out in the rain and got a chill."

Chapter 19, page 185 [Andrew Lettich & Francesca Harris]

toilet (n) /ˈtɔ lɔt/: outhouse, originating in French spoken previously on the
island. A wooden building, about thirty-six inches square, with a door for privacy and a lime and ash pit below. Ex. “We had a separate outside toilet too” Ch. 2, p. 22 [Matt Eisenman] Shakasha Davis

**tongues were wag·ging,** /tɒŋɡz-ˈwɛɡ ən/, v: the action of gossiping EX: “Back on Sapelo, heads were shaking and tongues were wagging, now, especially among the women.” (Ch 25, pg 243) [Lynne Tanzer]

**trick·ster** /trɪkˈstər/ noun: individual who is known for or whose motives are to beguile or fool people into believing or doing something that is untrue Ex: There’s always a “trickster” in real life, and Asberry was it in our family. plural tricksters Ch 22, pg. 213 [Merry Luong]

**tuck·ing Sys·tem** /tʌk ˈɪŋ ˈsɪstəm/ n. A system in which the bottom of a fishing net, when thrown into a body of water, tucks underneath itself, creating a bag in the water. Ex. “It’s got what you call a tucking system, and when you draw up the line, the net draws up like a bag, and that holes the fish in.” (Ch.8 Pg.81) [Kris Goodall]

**waist** (n) /west/ : a gathered skirt or blouse. Ex. “She wore gathered skirts and blouses she called ‘waists.’” pl. waists Ch. 2, p. 22 [Matt Eisenman]

**wake** /wek/ noun: a gathering held prior to the funeral where deceased’s loved ones and family came together to watch over the body and can be followed with a celebration of the deceased’s life. Ex: As people came to the house, they brought food because the grown-ups always held a “wake” for the person that died. pl. wakes see also set ups Ch 24, pg. 232 [Merry Luong]
keep them clean and when they got to the church the first thing they did was wash their feet and put their shoes on. They did not enter the church with dirty feet.” Ch 28, pg 289 [Muriel Lange]

Watch Night /ˈwɔtʃ nɑit/ n a ceremony held on New Year’s Eve

EX: On New Year’s Eve we hold a ceremony called Watch Night, and that’s an old, old church service that reminds me a lot like our G eechee saying, ‘One go, one come,’ except instead of referring to one of your loved ones dying and one being born, you’re watching the passing of the old year and the birth of a new one.

watcha /ˈwɔtʃə/: a pronunciation variation for “what are you.” To ask a question of concern. Ex. “Watcha looking at?” Ch.1, p. 17 [Matt Eisenman] Ex. “Watcha y’all doing back here?” Ch.6, p.70 [Shelby Clemons], Ex: – “Watcha’ mean?” Ch 28, pg 282 [Muriel Lange]

what·so·ever, (what· o· e vɔr) pron: one, or many, or all with no specification EX: “She would grab a piece of old cloth or whatsoever she could get her hands on…” (Ch 25, pg 240) [Lynne Tanzer]

white /wait/ adjective: a color that is associated with purity. Ex: She was sitting in the corner and not saying anything and she was dressed all in “white” and she had this halo around her head. Ch 24, pg 229 [Merry Luong]

white root (n.s.) /ˈwɔtʃ rʌt/: A good form of root, done for good intentions, such as warding off illness or bringing about good luck. See also “root.” Ex: "Grandpa dealt in white root mostly. Like if a man came and said, "Can you help me with somethin' so I can get a job? I'm down on my luck," he would give him something for good fortune.” Chapter 19, page 189 [Andrew Lettich]

whole (adj) /hɔl /: virginal. Ex. “Each man would just use her. She got pregnant and had a baby and then they left her alone and weth with someone else. They married someone who was ‘whole,’ that’s what they called it then.” Ch. 5, p. 52 [Matt Eisenman]

whole baby (n) /hol bebi /: the totality of the spiritual part and the physical part of the baby. Ex. You didn’t say ‘baby.’ You said its name. That way you were calling the whole baby – the spirit of the baby along with the actual baby.” Ch. 8 p. 78 [Matt Eisenman]

wind in their jaw, (wɪnd·n· ˈθɑr·ja) talk for the sake of the action alone EX: “Some people who wanna puff and put wind in their jaw said…”(CH 27, pg 277) [Lynne Tanzer]

win·nowed /ˈwɪnəd/ vb to remove (as chaff) by a current of air EX: “…and the African women even winnowed the rice in the old-fashioned way in huge, circular, shallow baskets made of coiled grasses bound with strips of fiber.” Ch 29, pg 307 [Muriel Lange]

wit’choo /wɪt·chuu/ prep ph with you EX: What’s wrong wit’choo?” Ch 30, pg 329 [Muriel Lange]

wret·ches (pl. n.) /rɛt ˈkæz/ : children with no manners. Ex. “You kept your mouth shut, or she would start in, ‘Yeah, the chirren these days ain’t got a bit of manners. They just listen at your conversation or look right in your eye
when you’ talkin’, those no-manners little wretches, them’” (Ch. 13, pg. 131). [Ashley Johnston]

**ya (p) /yə/**: a pronunciation variation for “you.” Ex. “I know ya see sump’n.” Ch. 1, p. 18 [Matt Eisenman]

**y’all (cont.) /yal/:** contraction for “you all.” variation of “you all”, second personal plural form of you. Ex. “whatcha y’all waitin’ for?” Ch.1, p. 15 [Matt Eisenman], Ex. “Y’all quit picking on Cousin Alice” (Ch. 14, pg. 143). [Ashley Johnston], Ex.: “You didn’t know how to swim, usually and your parents had been telling you, ‘Stay out of that water, stay out of that water, y’all drown, messing around in that water.’” Chapter 16, page 166 [Gale Skipworth], Ex: “Y’all better make up your mind” (Ch 25, pg 247) [Lynne Tanzer]

**York’s Land’ing** a location on Sapelo, Ex: a location on Sapelo on the west side near Long Tabby on Burn Creek, where slaves were often unloaded.” Ch 28, pg 281 [Muriel Lange]

**you’ (pr. s. or pl.) [yu]:** diminutive for “your,” a possessive case of you Ex: “I saw you’ puppy inside my chicken house…” Chapter 19, page 193 [Kim Cochran]