The poem “Have you Heard my Special K” is to honor the memory and the love of my daughter Kaiya LouiseLeslie-Anne Smith who passed away suddenly in 2016. Kaiya was a youth spoken word artist who impacted many lives young and old.

Twenty years ago, I was Kaiya’d when I was handed five pounds of life. I was made to vet my definition of not only being a mother but also me being a woman. For 18 years, I weighed my words with the great importance because it was shaping the mind and heart of my daughter. Each word was measured with anticipation, fear, hope, and stirred with truth. With each season, I tilled the soil of our souls and planted seeds of reciprocity, justice, and love hoping that the sun would rise to give us a better day. The daily work of finding our better selves would need to be mantra’d by the conviction of our hearts and the dedication of our hands.

When Kaiya put volume to her voice she challenged everyone around her to dig up the questions that the status quo made us bury in the name of conformity. She never lived life "off the racks". She learned the importance of owning your style and finding the establishments, organizations and individuals that brings out, dresses, and celebrates the true you...A Swaggalicious Diva Extraordinaire!!!

Life is not a one size fits all, and it is hurtful to be called “leftovers”, “outsiders” or “extra” just because we don't meet the views of people. As I watched our lives changing, she encouraged me to find my "new normal" as I encouraged her to find her passions. We were in each other's worlds growing into better versions of ourselves each day, until one day there were no more words, no more sounds, no more support from my Special K.

In my journey of mourning, as a mother and a fellow creative, many people have shared with me how they have been “Kaiya’d”. The loss challenged me to keep the words and memory of my daughter relevant to people who would yet to discover her. Now the journey is continued by taking the blueprint of her poetry and cadence to find the jewels that will continue to encourage us to love ourselves and "style from within".

In the poem “Have you Heard my Special K” there are three players – Kaiya as the source, me as the narrator the connector, and the audience as the receptor. Each have actions and reactions of what knowing what Kaiya has created and manifested.