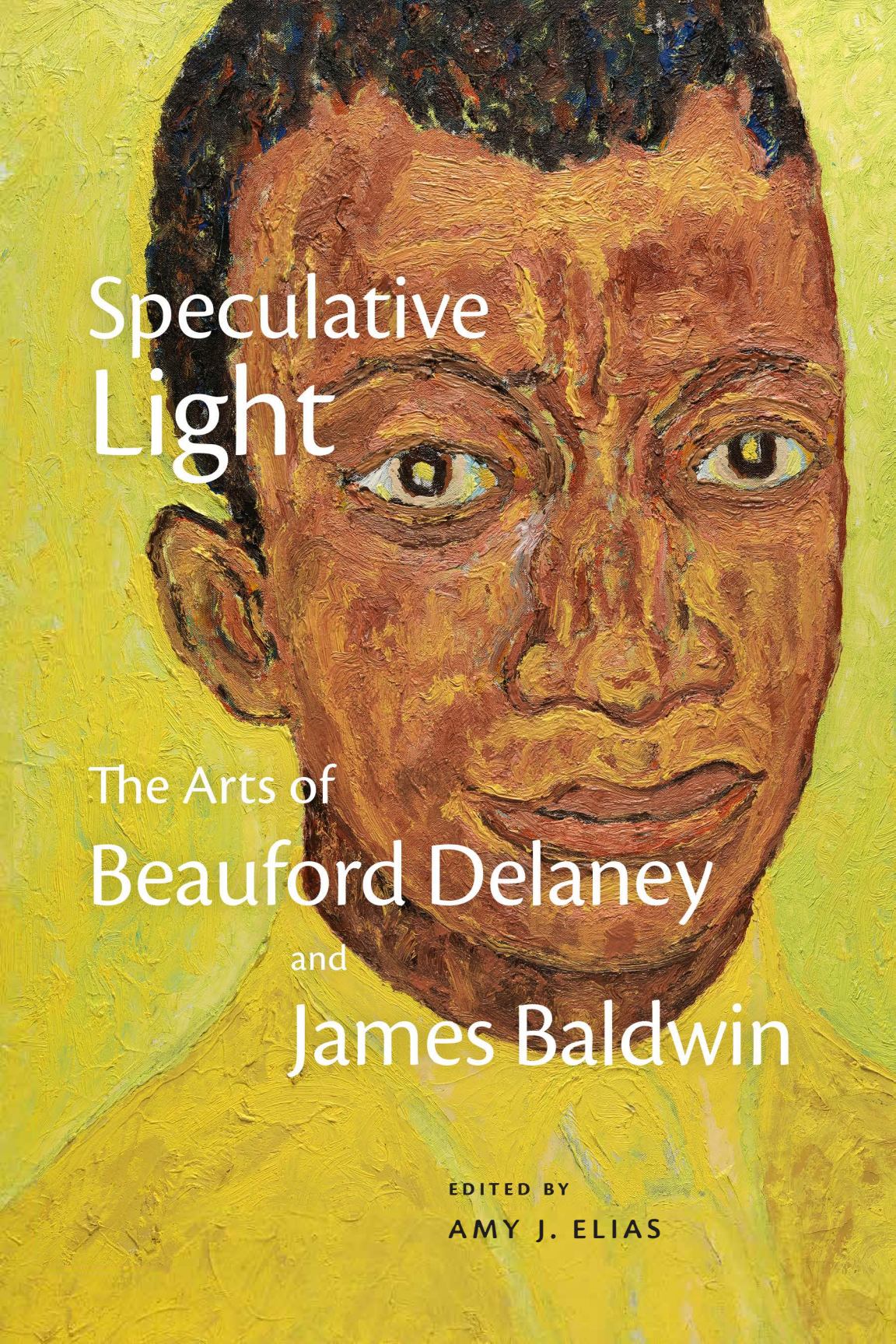
Speculative
Light
The Arts of
Beauford Delaney
and
James Baldwin
EDITED BY
AMY J. ELIAS

Speculative Light

The Arts of Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin

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This book is dedicated to
Beauford Delaney
and James Baldwin,
and to all who work for justice,
teach wisdom,
and create beauty in our world.

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Coordinating the various parts of this project has been challenging as well as exciting, and I am extremely grateful to all who worked with me in so many different ways. Most importantly, I would like to thank the contributors to this volume. Their brilliance, generosity, and patience have been exemplary, and I am humbled and grateful to have been able to work with such amazing scholars.

I would like to give heartfelt thanks to Derek Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator for the Estate of Beauford Delaney, for his help with image permissions, for setting up an amazing exhibition of never-before-seen work by Beauford Delaney in the University of Tennessee Student Union Gallery during the 2020 Delaney-Baldwin symposium, and for becoming a wonderful community friend during all phases of this project. I would also like to thank those galleries, institutions, and individuals that have provided permission to reproduce Delaney's work, most notably Derek Spratley and the Delaney Estate; the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in New York; the Knoxville Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art; SCAD Museum of Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Chrysler Museum of Art; the Tate Museum; the Guggenheim Museum; Clark Atlanta University Art Museum; the Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester; the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Smithsonian American Art Museum; David Leeming; Henry Louis Gates Jr.; Beatrice Cazac; Statens Museum for Kunst Copenhagen; Národní galerie Praha; l'Institut Giacometti; Getty Images; Sandra McPherson; the Robert Mann Gallery; *Playbill* magazine; and the Artists Rights Society.

This collection grew out of a three-day symposium, "In a Speculative Light: The Arts of James Baldwin and Beauford Delaney," funded in part by a 2019 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Connections Grant, which enabled me to bring twenty-six scholars to the University of Tennessee (UT) campus at Knoxville in February 2020 for an extraordinary event linking the university, the public, and scholars of international renown. I am grateful to the NEH for that support. I would also like to acknowledge support for this symposium from units within the University of Tennessee, Knoxville: the Denbo Center for Humanities and the Arts; the Better English Fund of the UT Department of English; the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development; the Frieson Black Cultural Center; the Mildred Haines and William Elijah Morris Lecture Endowment of the College of Arts and Sciences; the UT Office of Diversity and Engagement; and the UT Office of the Vice President for Research, Outreach and Economic Development. The symposium linked the Denbo Center to members of Knoxville's Delaney Project: Gathering Light, who became continuing community partners, and now to the Knoxville Delaney Legacy Project, which is based on university and community partnerships nurtured through the early Delaney Project. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone for their welcoming hospitality, unflagging energy, and creative, community-oriented souls: Sylvia Peters, chair of the Delaney Project: Gathering Light; the Reverend Reneé Kesler, director of the Beck Cultural Exchange Center and now leading the Delaney Legacy Project; Emily Anderson of Marble City Opera; Brandon Gibson (rest in peace); Warren Dockter, Steve Cotham, and others at the East Tennessee Historical Society; Jack Neely of the Knoxville History Project; Michael and Evelyn Gill; and Alan and Pat Rutenberg. I am honored to know Monique Wells of Les Amis de Beauford Delaney; everyone working on subjects related to Beauford Delaney recognizes her invaluable ongoing work to resurrect, publicize, and archive information about Delaney's art.

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No one deserves more thanks from me than Stephen C. Wicks, Barbara W. and Bernard E. Bernstein Curator at KMA and curator of the extraordinary 2020 KMA exhibition *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin: Through the Unusual Door*, with which we synced the UT symposium. I have never met a more generous and knowledgeable collaborator than Stephen: he has worked on all phases of this project with me with unflagging goodwill, energy, and preeminent expertise. He has been essential to advising me and my staff on permissions for images reproduced in the present volume, to the point that he could be named artistic consultant for the volume. Furthermore, his willingness to share, absolutely freely, his twenty-year work on Beauford Delaney with others has launched careers (often with little acknowledgment) and will continue to launch publications on Delaney well into the future. I would also like to thank Joan Murray, former staff at the Denbo Center, who worked with me unstintingly to put together the 2020 Baldwin-Delaney symposium. Emily Harrison worked as my graduate research assistant on both the symposium and all phases of the related book project. Thank you, Emily, for always doing exemplary work, meeting deadlines, working extraordinarily well with others, coordinating permissions mailings and documents, and putting up with my constant requests for charts, workflow documents, and editing tasks.

We held the UT symposium a few weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic struck the world and before the United States melted down politically and socially over lockdowns, Black Lives Matter protests, and incendiary political rhetoric from our highest elected public officials. The scholars represented in this volume overcame extraordinary mental and sometimes physical challenges to see this publication through. I thank all of the contributors for their perseverance, generosity, and commitment to this project. I also thank Laura Jaramillo and Livia Tenzer at Duke University Press and especially editor Courtney Berger for her continuing faith in this project, which took longer than it normally would, given the world-historical events in which it incubated. Thank you also to the two anonymous reviewers of the book proposal and manuscript; your suggestions have made the book better.

This book was conceived in a time of plenty but also a time of silenced voices. It was birthed through a scholarly event built on collegiality and care and put together in a time of pandemic and outrage. One can hope that it is read in a time of renewal and freedom. I think Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin would appreciate all of that, and I thank them both, profusely, for what they brought to these historical moments, and after.

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INTRODUCTION

Speculative Light

The Arts of Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin

Amy J. Elias

I do know that great art can only be created out of love.

James Baldwin

Delaney's world is less programmatic in its construction and ultimately more about love.

Pamela Wye

The chapters in this volume examine the work of two famous and unique US artists—the painter Beauford Delaney (1901–79) and the author James Baldwin (1924–87). Delaney and Baldwin met in 1940 at Delaney's Greene Street apartment in New York City when Baldwin was a teenager and

Delaney was thirty-nine years old. They were friends, even family, for almost forty years. Very little to date has been published about their relationship, yet in fact the lifelong Delaney-Baldwin friendship was instrumental in shaping how these world-famous artists conceptualized creative life and the form and social meaning of art. Baldwin found in Delaney a father figure, an artistic genius, and model of perseverance as a southern, gay, Black man; he wrote that "Beauford never gave me any lectures, but he didn't have to—he expected me to accept and respect the value placed upon me."[1] In a 1984 interview printed in *Paris Review*, Baldwin notes that Delaney "taught me how to see, and how to trust what I saw."[2] Baldwin's short story collection *Going to Meet the Man* (1965) and his children's book *Little Man, Little Man* are dedicated to Delaney, and Delaney is included in the dedication to *No Name in the Street* (1972). In Delaney's last years in a sanitarium in France, Baldwin was appointed one of his primary trustees and helped see to his needs. A famous picture by Max Petrus taken in 1976, shortly before Delaney's death, shows them standing together in a garden, gently holding hands.[3] Baldwin wrote eloquently of the older painter in his 1985 essay "The Price of the Ticket": "Beauford was the first walking, living proof, for me, that a black man could be an artist. In a warmer time, a less blasphemous place, he would have been recognized as my Master and I as his Pupil. He became, for me, an example of courage and integrity, humility and passion."[4] As the essays in this volume make clear, Delaney educated a young Baldwin about light as both inner illumination and artistic trope: remembering Delaney teaching him about the beauty in ordinary street life, Baldwin wrote, "He is a great painter, among the very greatest."[5]

We know less of Delaney's feelings about Baldwin, but it is clear from his letters and long companionship with the writer that he considered Baldwin to be family. Baldwin's influence on Delaney is asserted by David Leeming, whose personal relationship with both artists and former position as Baldwin's secretary gave him access to their meetings and their correspondence (see his chapter in this collection and his books *James Baldwin: A Biography* [1994] and *Amazing Grace: A Life of Beauford Delaney* [1998]). Delaney, of a generation that felt viscerally the policies of Jim Crow, found in Baldwin a powerful intellectual with a fearless social conscience committed to civil rights causes. He also found a spiritual partner and muse who provided emotional comfort, stability, and creative validation. A now-famous Delaney painting titled *Dark Rapture* (1941; plate 1) is known as the first of many portraits of Baldwin that Delaney would complete during his lifetime. Delaney took Baldwin to galleries and introduced him to friends, and he made the

funeral arrangements after the death of Baldwin's father. Encouraged by Baldwin, who left the United States for France in the 1940s, Delaney left in 1953 and likewise settled in Paris. He lived in France until his death in 1979 and there created some of his best work. Delaney lived with Baldwin for a time, traveled to various locations with him over many years (including Istanbul), and kept in touch through correspondence.

Both men devoted their lives to art. Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin admonished everyone to look down from the shop signs dominating the public's gaze and outward from our mental gated communities; they asked us to contemplate a fallen brown leaf on the asphalt city sidewalk and to perceive its actual colors, its simplicity, and its natural truth. Penning essay after essay, page after page, Baldwin felt the urgency of a calling—what for him was an obsession to connect with the Word. And while Baldwin poured forth jeremiads like a holy stream, Delaney painted with equal urgency, equal fervor, "trying to say with my life the unsayable," for "art is the authority to induce what we cannot perceive."[6] In 1963, Delaney wrote to his friend, the author Henry Miller: "I pray for the courage to keep struggling to express in color the substance of what life is directing. The need in the world for beauty, harmony, good confidence, brotherhood, sunlight, music, humanity . . . was never so urgent. The creative life is holy."[7] Like Baldwin, Delaney created art as if his life depended on it, as if the world depended on it.

The profligacy of their efforts is astounding. Both Delaney and Baldwin spent themselves in words and colors, recklessly emptying themselves out into writing and painting and conversation. They broke their bodies and their minds straining toward expression, toward some connection that hovered—pleading, coy, cruel, disdainful, yet sometimes full of perfect love—behind the indices and icons that danced on their pages and canvases. Baldwin asserts in his short essay "The Price May Be Too High" (1969) that the Black artist wants "to reach something of the truth, and to tell it—to use his instrument as truthfully as he knows how,"[8] and much criticism has explored how Baldwin's own identity as a child preacher and son of a preacher affected both his writing style and his view of truth telling.[9] Both men felt art to be an almost religious calling. In the 1930s, while teaching at the Primitive African Art Center in New York, Delaney (along with his younger brother Joseph Delaney and the painters Ellis Wilson and Palmer Hayden) formed a group they called "The Saints."[10] In *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective* (1978)—the exhibition catalogue for the important Studio Museum in Harlem show meant, in part, to raise money in the last years of

the painter's life—Mary Schmidt Campbell writes, "Beauford Delaney. To a small coterie of artists, writers and critics he is 'Amazing and Invariable,' a master colorist, religious in his devotion to his craft. Because of his austere, impoverished life-style, a martyr."[11]

Martyrdom, however, does not come cheap. Moreover, as socially conceived, it participates both in human categories and in a logic of triumphant sacrifice disallowed Black persons by the operations of white supremacy.[12] Martyrdom was, to these two artists, too historically fraught a concept to encompass the figurative, discursive significations of the Black body and voice. As it does in both religious philosophies and Black aesthetics, the liminal logic of paradox and its psychological tensions informed Baldwin's speech and Delaney's brushstrokes. On the one hand, these two artists waged an ideological battle against the atrocities and legacies of US race history; on the other hand, they lived fully in a spiritual artistic life of becoming and connection. (Writes Baldwin, "Memory is a traitor and . . . life does not contain the past tense.")[13] They dedicated themselves to human community in lived time and space while the abrasive everyday, the intelligible and sensible world, buffeted them and rebuked them, relentlessly. Delaney and Baldwin lived in postwar America and France, and as Black, gay expatriates, both knew the duplicity and motivated cruelty of representation. Yet they also devoted their lives to representation, redefined in a pure space of art. To see Black life as something of beauty, if one knew how to look, and to voice its abjection without pronouncing abjection its permanent lot—this was, for both men, to carve out a third way, apart from simulation and co-optation. It was to engage in an act of politicized love.[14] Both grappled with an impossible task: to communicate and connect to truth through disciplinary formations and mediations that are structured to evade, undermine, pollute, and starve truth. If they served as cosmopolitan priests of art like many of the high modernists of their time, they themselves pursued a different heresy, a Gnostic rather than a Romantic one, reaching toward origins obscured under settler colonialism and genocide and errantly exploring the volatile and politicized relation between illusion and enlightenment in the afterlife of slavery.[15]

Baldwin's work was often autobiographical, and we should be curious about how his lifelong friend Delaney figures in his work as an unseen interlocutor, for Baldwin the writer and Delaney the painter cultivated a queer familial relation in both life and art.[16] In short stories such as Baldwin's famous "Sonny's Blues" (1957), for instance (discussed by a number of contributors to the present collection), the logic of the "abstract" musical form

of jazz redefines the family relations of Baldwin's characters, just as Delaney's abstract art—particularly his abstract portraits—redefines relations with friends and artistic figures as familial ones.[17] In Baldwin's and Delaney's art as well as in their lives, we see a queered masculinity that creates a nonconsanguineous kindred, a nurturing care.[18] Fred Moten argues in *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (2003) that the feminine is the denigrated natal origin of Blackness, and that "the ongoing loss or impossible recovery of the maternal" must occur through voiced significations that elide, blur, evade, and transgress the Word of the Western Father and the historical commodification of Blackness by the capitalist West.[19] Such an insight gives a new valence to biographer Leeming's observation of Baldwin in his last days: "He wanted men to take care of him—not, I was sure, because he disliked or mistrusted women, but because it was important to him that men express the feminine within themselves, that they adopt the kind of tender nurturing usually associated with women. We became 'disciples' of his gospel, 'gentle' men of the 'welcome table.' To put it another way, we ritually experienced the 'stink of love' in Giovanni's room."[20] The radical gesture in Baldwin's work is the countering of white racist formulations of criminalized, violent, hypersexualized Black masculinity with a gesture toward porosity and Black care between men—Sonny and Creole, but also James Baldwin himself and Beauford Delaney.

Delaney was always within Baldwin's kinship circle. If we take seriously Moten's injunction that Blackness "consent not to be a single being," then looking at how Baldwin wanted his circle to "express the feminine within themselves" opens us to a discussion of how the Baldwin-Delaney friendship—and the concentric circles of care in which it lived—offers a vision of Black masculinity and Black arts as multiple but not fungible, as moving beyond the trap of the signifying body to a presence in sound and light on a stage of deterritorialized Being.[21] Not Blackness as a universal, but *this* Blackness—the specific relation between two Black and gay men who conflate aesthetics with relative-ity and care in a specific relation to history—asks us to reflect on art and community in a new way.

In what ways can we analyze not only the blues or jazz aesthetic operating in Delaney's work but also the influence of Baldwin operating there, an enactment of a beauty that is "beautiful because it wasn't hurried and it was no longer a lament"?[22] In what ways can we understand the lifelong interchange between Baldwin and Delaney as creating a dialogic and synesthetic aesthetic that is *both* negation and affirmation—an aesthetic that might be described by the Latin *interesse*, or perhaps by Moten's "form and content of

a dialectic of the not-in-between"?[23] How can we begin to understand the Baldwin-Delaney nexus as an imprecise relationality that "interrupts knowledge systems that seek to observe, index, know, and discipline blackness"?[24]

James Baldwin, Beauford Delaney: Scholarship and Sources

James Baldwin is by far the better known of the two friends. Born in Harlem, New York City, to a poor family with a stern preacher father at its head, Baldwin began writing at age thirteen. He left the United States for France when he was twenty-four years old, and in adulthood he adopted three primary locations as "home": New York, Paris, and Istanbul. He would pass away in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, another location he frequented in France. Because Baldwin's career was long and he was a prolific writer, because he was open about his homosexuality in a dangerously repressive time, because he became an icon of the US civil rights movement, and because he knew virtually everyone of consequence in the New Left political arena and the literary, Hollywood film, and theater worlds, the literature about him and his work is robust (and includes his own autobiographical nonfiction essays).

Baldwin's oeuvre is vast and varied—novels, plays, poems, and essays created from the 1940s to the mid-1980s. Today, scholarship about Baldwin is flourishing, with art exhibitions, international conferences, entire journals, and books devoted to his life and work.[25] New access to Baldwin's papers has contributed to the boom. Many of the writer's papers had been sealed by his estate and were purchased and made available to scholars only in 2017, by the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Yet the letters have not been published, and correspondence with David Baldwin, Beauford Delaney, Lucien Happersberger, and Mary Painter is closed until 2036, while material related to Baldwin's unfinished manuscript "Remember This House"—the basis for the documentary film *I Am Not Your Negro* (2017), directed by Raoul Peck—is closed until 2026.[26]

Nonetheless, many today—and especially artists and critics working in film, the visual arts, and literary studies—see Baldwin's life and writing as fundamentally important to twenty-first-century Black Lives Matter, LGBTQIA, and other social-justice struggles. Justin Joyce, Dwight McBride, and Douglas Field, the authors of "Baltimore Is Still Burning: The Rising Relevance of James Baldwin" (2015), note, "The ongoing public interest in Baldwin's works, just as the seeming ever-readiness for journalists and pundits alike to call upon his critical voice in moments of tragedy, testifies

to our need for an artist whose searing words can so uniquely lay bare the demands of a time, people, or nation."[27] Examples abound. In 2015—amid the years of police shootings of Michael Brown and Walter Scott—digital sound artists Mendi and Keith Obadike created *Blues Speaker [for James Baldwin]*, a twelve-hour work of digital sound shown on the walls of a New School university building and based on Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues."[28] Later, Peck's film *I Am Not Your Negro* adapted to the screen Baldwin's notes for an unfinished book centered on Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Medgar Evers. But then came report after report of Black deaths at the hands of police and the 2020 riots resulting in part from the death of George Floyd, a forty-six-year-old Black man murdered by a white policeman in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Floyd's death galvanized nations and sparked worldwide Black Lives Matter protests. The world's eyes once again turned to Baldwin's prophetic writings, and during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, his work once again became fundamental to reading groups, course curricula, and TV news.[29] In 2023, in the aftermath of a global pandemic and worldwide protests, Darryl Pinckney introduced a three-film exhibition dedicated to Baldwin, *James Baldwin Abroad*, at Film Forum in New York City.[30] One could cite scores of other examples and specific instances of how Baldwin's work is influencing writers today (e.g., see Shawn Anthony Christian's chapter in this volume). On video sites such as YouTube, a full archive of Baldwin interviews, films, and commentaries is now available, including trailers for Terence Dixon's *Meeting the Man: James Baldwin in Paris* (1970), clips from Sedat Pakay's *James Baldwin: From Another Place* (1973), and recordings of Baldwin's television appearances and lectures. At the time of this writing, a biopic is being discussed based on Leeming's 1994 biography, with Billy Porter playing Baldwin and cowriting the script with Dan McCabe.[31] And even in popular culture Baldwin is ubiquitous. In 2004, the United States Postal Service created a first-class postage stamp dedicated to Baldwin. In the Emmy-winning comedy series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, we saw a "Shy Baldwin" (a mirror image of the real Baldwin, for this "Baldwin" is a closeted Black man who through the late 1950s and early 1960s entertains white club-goers in segregated hotels at which he himself can't stay); and on social media platforms such as Twitter, Baldwin references abound.[32] Indeed, by 2017, Jennifer Schuessler could note that "James Baldwin died in 1987, but his moment is now. His books are flying off the shelves. . . . Baldwin's prophetic essays on race read like today's news."[33]

There is also a new interest in Baldwin as a cross-disciplinary artist, a writer intimately involved with music, visual arts such as film and photography, and

performance. Baldwin's 1964 collaboration with the photographer Richard Avedon, *Nothing Personal*, was reissued in 2017 with an introduction by Hilton Als; it collects Avedon's photographs and presents a four-part essay by Baldwin on love, racism, and social ills. Als himself (see his chapter in this collection) curated the 2019 installation *God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin* at David Zwirner Gallery in New York City; the installation presented some work by Delaney but also put Baldwin into conversation with filmic artists and painters such as Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Diane Arbus, Avedon, Alvin Baltrop, Marlene Dumas, Ja'Tovia Gary, Glenn Ligon, Alice Neel, Cameron Rowland, Kara Walker, and James Welling.[34] Artists have long referenced Baldwin in their visual work, and one sees Baldwin's long-term influence today in contemporary works such as Glenn Ligon's *Stranger (Full Text) #1* (2020–21), a diptych that measures 10 feet high and 45 feet long (3 × 13.7 m), from his *Stranger* series, which he began in 1997 and features stenciled excerpts from Baldwin's 1953 *Harper's Magazine* essay "Stranger in the Village." One might also cite Don Bachardy's 1964 sketch of Baldwin, Jack Witten's *Black Monolith I, a Tribute to James Baldwin* (1988), or Garrett Rittenberg's *Portrait of James Baldwin* (2018), among the scores of references and influences.[35]

Yet for the most part, while Baldwin's film criticism has been examined, there is a dearth of commentary about Baldwin and painting/sculpture. We do see him discussing African arts in the Center for African Art's 1987 *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, where ten rather famous people involved in the arts were asked to choose, and give their impressions of, ten African art objects. As Center founder Susan Vogel notes in the exhibition catalogue, which was published the year of Baldwin's death, Baldwin "is clearly drawn to sculptures that have a narrative quality, that show more than one figure, often in interaction—a rare feature in African art."[36] He also struggles to think of the stories or narrative scenes these figures represent ("It's all done in another vocabulary which I am not equipped to try, and I wouldn't even attempt to articulate"), but he often aligns the art objects with a Black diasporic history ("This art speaks directly to me out of my maligned and dishonored past"). What is interesting is Baldwin's voicing (in 1987, eight years after Delaney's death) of a statement about form and content that crosses through his earlier work and aligns him with Delaney's theory of color and the artist's deep connection to the subjects of his work: "The artist's work is his intention. There's this curious dichotomy in the West about form and content. The form *is* the content. I think the work of artists is to be useful . . . to have them on the wall—you walk in and you are among friends."[37]

This was how Delaney's apartments often looked: the poor rooms draped in white sheets and hung with his paintings of friends and beloved locales—rooms known, moreover, as places of unceasing, generous talk and companionship, where "you walk in and you are among friends." Yet while he was internationally recognized as a master painter during his lifetime, Delaney was almost lost to history. Born and taught to draw in Knoxville, Tennessee, he became a central figure in Boston, New York, and Paris high-art circles, exhibiting in Europe and in the United States. He was beloved among writers, painters, and filmmakers; promoted by numerous patrons of the arts (such as American cultural attaché Darthea Speyer); and befriended by notable figures such as Georgia O'Keeffe (who drew charcoal and pastel portraits of Delaney in 1943), Carl Van Vechten (who took portraits of Delaney in 1953), Countee Cullen, Louis Armstrong, Romare Bearden, and, later, Henry Louis Gates Jr. He painted (sometimes from memory) writer Jean Genet, singer Marian Anderson, and the surrealist poet Stanislas Rodanski. By the 1970s, he had seen his work at the Whitney Museum in New York and the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, in *Playboy* magazine, at the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and at the University of Texas Art Museum, while *Jet* magazine referred to him as the "dean" of African American painters.[38] And, of course, there was the friendship with Baldwin. In a 1976 interview with *Essence*, Baldwin noted that "the most important person in my life [as a writer] was and is a very great but not very well-known Black painter named Botha [*sic*] Delaney."[39] Delaney often was referred to as a figure of inspiration and wisdom; he cultivated an urbane, generous demeanor and a tutelary one with protégés, and his outwardly monastic life and his complete dedication to his painting led many to see him as a wise elder. Moving among luminaries, Delaney nonetheless always lived in extreme poverty and was plagued by mental illness throughout his life, hearing inner voices that mocked and condemned him both for his Blackness and for his homosexuality.

The earliest treatments of Delaney's artistry appeared in publications such as the now famous and much quoted encomium *The Amazing and Invariable Beauford DeLaney*, written by Henry Miller in 1945. Miller and Delaney were lifelong friends. On the occasion of Miller's eightieth birthday in 1971, the Centre Culturel Américain in Paris, affiliated with the University of California, Los Angeles, hosted an exhibition in tribute to the writer, *Les amis parisiens de Henry Miller*, in which Delaney showed his *Portrait de Henry Miller* and six other works, in the company of artists Brassaï, Grégoire

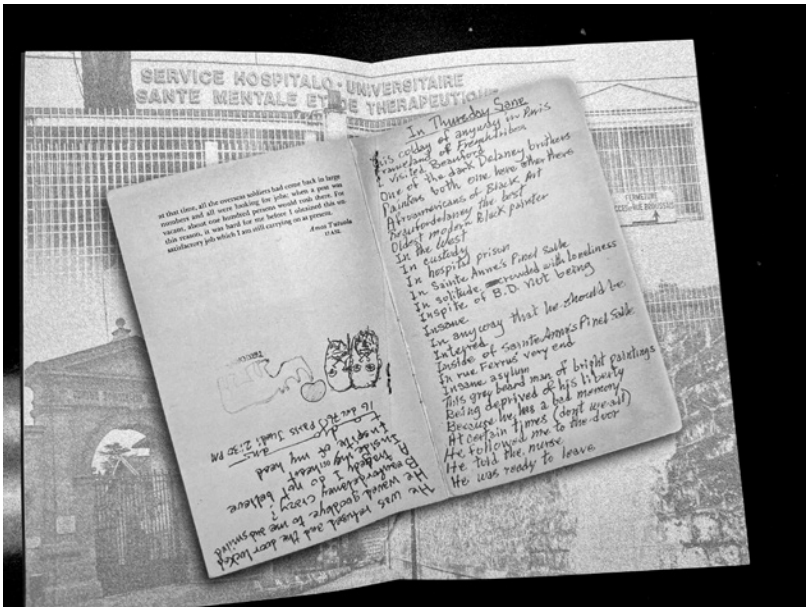
Michonze, and Hans Reichel, as well as a film by Robert Snyder titled *The Henry Miller Odyssey*.[40]

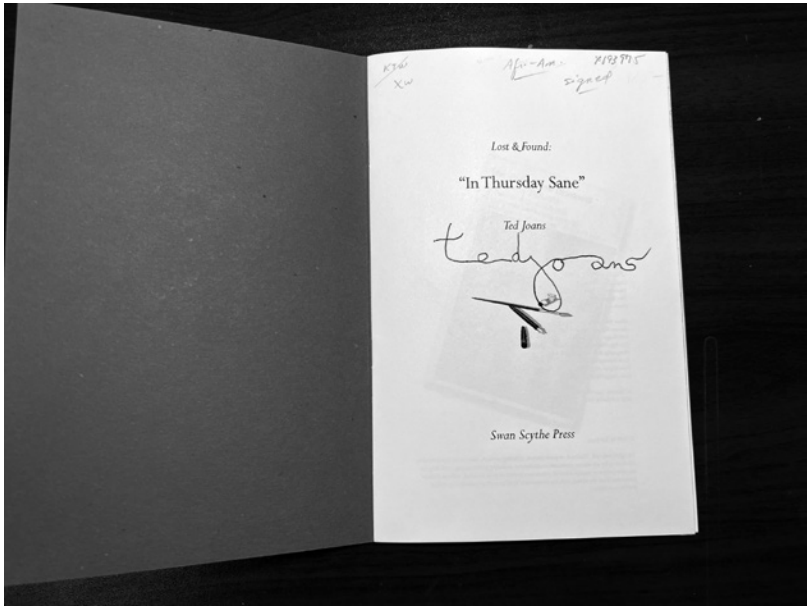
In a 1958 issue of *Preuves*, in one of the very rare instances in which he wrote about his views publicly, Delaney appears as a commentator on "la culture noire" in a forum (in French) organized by Jean-José Marchand and in the company of Ralph Ellison, Davidson Nicol, Gilbert Gratiant, Richard Wright, and Richard Gibson.[41] Later, James Jones and James Baldwin wrote commentaries on Delaney's exhibition at the Galerie Lambert in the Île Saint-Louis. In Delaney's last years, Richard A. Long and others traveled to Paris to rescue more than sixty of his paintings that had been locked in his abandoned apartment by the French government as collateral for delinquent accounts; those paintings formed the basis of the historic exhibition *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective* held in 1979 at the Studio Museum in Harlem. For the most part, in fact, both during his lifetime and posthumously, essays about Delaney's work appear in catalogues of museum and gallery exhibitions devoted solely or largely to him.[42]

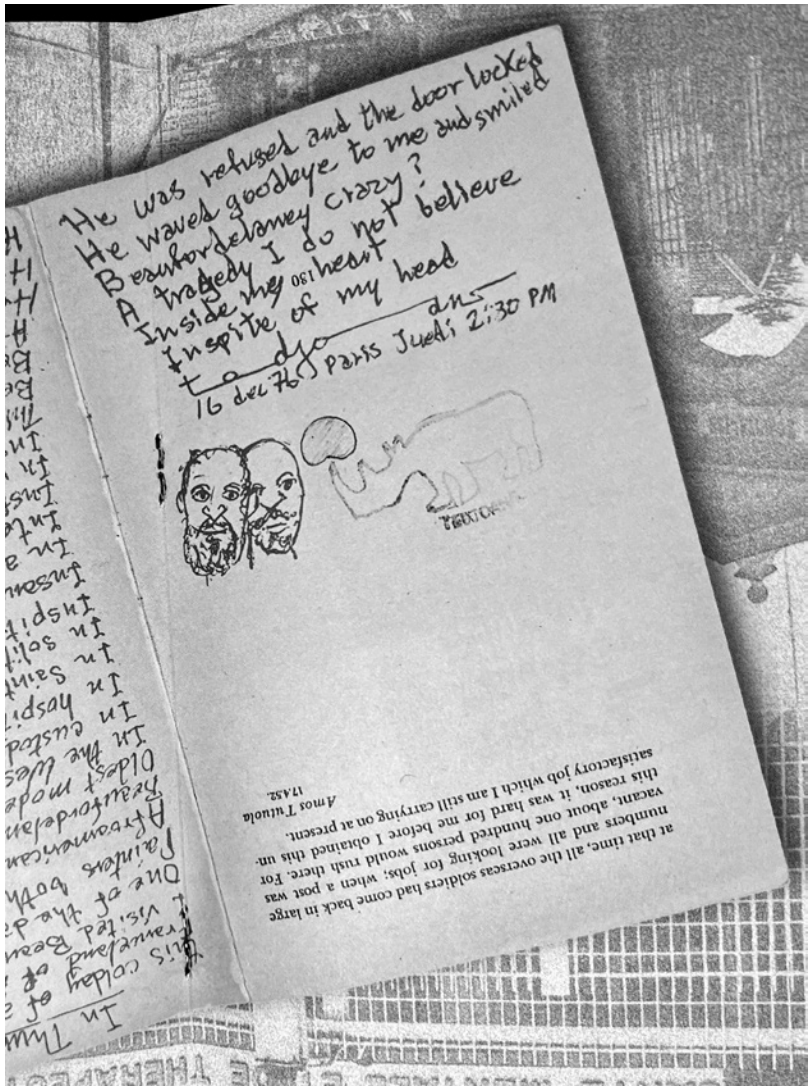
Tragically, Delaney died in 1979, in Paris, in Sainte-Anne Hospital for the Insane, and was buried in something like a pauper's grave outside of the city. Tributes, however, surfaced both toward the end of his life and after his death. For example, writing in 1973, the jazz poet, painter, and trumpeter Ted Joans published an homage to Delaney in *Black World* magazine. In that brief piece, noting that he first became acquainted with Delaney's work through a 1948 article in the short-lived magazine *Our World*, Joans wrote that Delaney and Jacob Lawrence "were the only *consistent* Afroamerican artists on the scene" in the 1940s and that "one has nothing to fear from the paintings of Beauford Delaney but the truth."[43] In December 1976, after visiting Delaney at Saint Anne's, Joans wrote a poem, "In Thursday Sane," in a used copy of Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952); it was found in a used bookstore by poet Sandra McPherson in 1999 and published by her in 2001 (see figures I.1a–c).[44] In the poem, Joans calls "Beaufordelaney" "the best / Oldest modern Black painter / In the West" and expresses regret that Delaney was being held, seemingly wrongfully, in Saint Anne's, "In spite of B.D. not being / Insane / In any way that he should be." As Delaney biographer Leeming later makes clear, however, Delaney suffered immensely from auditory hallucinations and major health problems, had attempted suicide, and by the late 1970s was incapable of living on his own. Leeming records how Baldwin and other friends rallied around Delaney, trying to find a way for the impoverished artist to be safe and have dignity in his last years.

After Delaney's death, his work was too frequently neglected on the international arts scene. Yet a number of exhibitions—often curated by those who knew him—featured his paintings.[45] He had been, and continues to be, championed by the Paul Facchetti Gallery in Paris and by the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in New York.[46] According to Monique Wells, by 2010 the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery had mounted more than twenty-five exhibitions that included some work by Delaney; the most recent at the time of this writing was *Be Your Wonderful Self: The Portraits of Beauford Delaney*, held in 2022.[47] Central to Delaney scholarship, however, has been Leeming's biography, *Amazing Grace*, published almost twenty years after the artist's death and the first (and for many years the only) book on his life and work. A meticulous work of integrity and sympathy, it has supplied almost all details of Delaney's life to subsequent scholars, given that Delaney's papers were for a long time in disarray and, later, not available to the public. A few more tributes also appeared at this time: in 1999, for example, Delaney's friend the Beat poet Cid Corman published *Tributary: Poems*, a book about Delaney and his work that included fifty short poems and five color plates of the artist's paintings (*The Burning Bush*, 1941; *Self Portrait*, 1944; *Chartres*, 1954; *Untitled*, *Clamart* 1961; and *Yellow Cypress*, 1972). The poems, dedicated to gallerist Philippe Briet, include references to Henry Miller and to James Baldwin.[48]

For the most part, however, after his death discussion by the general public about Delaney's work was muted. While the Delaney estate has been working diligently for twenty years to collect, curate, store, and sell the work, and while prominent galleries continue to champion it, two projects—one centered in the Paris and one in the United States—helped to garner public attention and generate interest among collectors and auction houses. The first comprises Les Amis de Beauford Delaney and the Wells International Foundation, both led by the American entrepreneur Monique Wells, whose research and writing led to her uncovering the story of Delaney's unmarked grave. In 2009 she founded Les Amis de Beauford Delaney as a French and US nonprofit association that helped launch a Paris exhibition of Delaney's work. The Wells International Foundation announced in 2020 that a full-length documentary film on Delaney, *Beauford Delaney: So Splendid a Journey*, was in preproduction.[49] The second, based in Knoxville, birthplace of Beauford and his brother, the likewise renowned painter Joseph Delaney, is the Delaney Project: Gathering Light, formed as a consortium of business, public, and educational entities working to make Knoxville an international center for Delaney studies.[50] That enterprise is now complemented by the Delaney Legacy Project, following the purchase in 2022 of the Beauford







I.1a–c

(*opposite, top*) Ted Joans, "In Thursday Sane," drawing and poem inscribed in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952); background image, asylum in Paris where Beauford Delaney stayed. (*opposite, bottom*) *In Thursday Sane*, edited by Sandra McPherson (Davis, CA: Swan Scythe Press, 2001). Courtesy of Sandra McPherson/Swan Scythe Press. (*above*) Detail of drawing and inscribed poem.

Delaney papers by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and by a partnership with Knoxville's Beck Cultural Exchange Center, headed by the Reverend Reneé Kesler. The Beck purchased one of the Delaney family homes, and at the time of this writing is working to create an artist residency, center of excellence, and museum in that space.[51]

By 2015, one could find the kitschy *Beauford Delaney: A Folio of Notecards* through the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery's online gift shop, perhaps signaling that Delaney's art had truly begun to reenter the mainstream.[52] Certainly high-art circles had returned to his work. The US artist Glenn Ligon curated a 2015 exhibition at the Tate Liverpool titled *Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions* that featured two works by Delaney (one a portrait of Baldwin) and put Delaney in the company of the abstract expressionists. The Wells International Foundation helped lay a stone at Delaney's unmarked grave at Thiais Cemetery and placed commemorative markers in Paris, and in 2016, with Columbia Global Centers, it organized the first solo exhibition of Delaney's works in France since a show organized by Darthea Speyer in 1992. In 2019, writer Hilton Als curated an exhibition on Baldwin (*God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin*) at the David Zwirner Gallery that prominently featured three paintings by Delaney, including *Dark Rapture*, his 1941 portrait of a teenage Baldwin (plate 1).[53] In 2020, the Knoxville Museum of Art held a groundbreaking exhibition of Delaney's work that for the first time put the artist and Baldwin together in a substantial way: *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin: Through the Unusual Door*. Today, Delaney's paintings hang prominently among modernist and postwar works in New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the National Portrait Gallery (notably featuring one of his portraits of Baldwin). However, for a number of reasons—because Delaney's estate has been largely closed to scholars, because Baldwin's correspondence with Delaney is still under a twenty-year seal, and because Delaney's reputation waned after his death—critical writing about the painter is appearing only now, with this renewed interest in his work and with the flourishing of Baldwin studies across disciplines. One might argue that Fred Moten's 2003 treatment of Delaney in his paradigm-shifting book *In the Break* reignited *academic* interest in Delaney's work, and it is encouraging that some of Delaney's papers are now available to scholars at the University of Tennessee. At least one new scholarly biography, based on access to that and other archives, is soon to be published. Today, Delaney's work is just starting to be aligned with discussions of queer art and Black aesthetics and discussed in relation to philosophical writing.[54]

Beauford and Jimmy, Together

It is not a coincidence that Moten begins his chapter on Baldwin in *In the Break* with an anecdote concerning Delaney.[55] In Baldwin's 1985 essay "The Price of the Ticket," he wrote, "If Beauford and Miss [Marian] Anderson were a part of my inheritance, I was a part of their hope," and noted Delaney's "absolute integrity: I saw him shaken many times and I lived to see him broken but I never saw him bow."[56] The two, Baldwin and Delaney, were friends for almost forty years, and their lives and works were incalculably altered by their relationship. Yet there is little published scholarship about the relationship, and to date there is no full-length study about Baldwin and Delaney as artists and friends. In 2004 Rachel Cohen included two chapters about Delaney in her award-winning book *A Chance Meeting*, speculating about Delaney's documented meetings with W. E. B. Du Bois and Baldwin. The Baldwin chapter is a short meditation on the two men that draws heavily from information in the Leeming biographies and Delaney's journal. Cohen saw that the Delaney-Baldwin relationship should be a lens through which we analyze the respective works of these two midcentury artists, yet little work has been done since.[57] *Speculative Light: The Arts of Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin* asserts that the lifelong Delaney-Baldwin friendship was in fact instrumental to the aesthetics of both artists, affecting how they each saw the world and conceptualized the artistic life. This most significant relationship in the lives of these two American artists had a vital impact on their respective work and cultural legacies.

As noted above, many of Baldwin's writings throughout his career contain references to Delaney—for example, in his 1965 essay "On the Painter Beauford Delaney" and in "The Price of the Ticket"—and one sees glimpses of Delaney in photographs of Baldwin and throughout the biographical film about Baldwin *The Price of the Ticket*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1990 and has been broadcast in more than forty countries to date.[58] In criticism, however, only Leeming's respective 1990s biographies of the two friends extensively address how their relationship shaped their works and lives.[59] In 2020, Stephen C. Wicks curated the Knoxville Museum of Art's Delaney-Baldwin exhibition *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin: Through the Unusual Door*, the catalogue for which includes a timeline that presents Delaney and Baldwin's entwined lives.[60] Funded by the Luce Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, the exhibition was a groundbreaking intervention in Delaney and Baldwin studies, one that featured more than forty-eight paintings in addition to works on paper,

letters and photographs, and audiovisual recordings. The museum is now the holder of more than fifty paintings and works on paper by Delaney and is "a vital resource for the study, preservation, and promotion" of the artist's work.[61] In conjunction with the exhibition, as director of the Denbo Center for Humanities and the Arts at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (then titled the UT Humanities Center), I ran a public, National Endowment for the Humanities–funded symposium, "In a Speculative Light: The Arts of James Baldwin and Beauford Delaney," that brought twenty-six scholars to Knoxville for presentations that form the basis of the present collection. At the time of this writing, the only published sources that bring Baldwin and Delaney together include Wicks's exhibition catalogue; one chapter in Cohen's *A Chance Meeting*; an article about Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues" that reads Delaney rather problematically into one of the key characters; Ligon's comments on his curatorial work for *Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions* and in the exhibition catalogue for the Delaney-Baldwin exhibition in Knoxville; blog entries at Monique Wells's website Les Amis de Beauford Delaney; a one-page discussion in *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* (2017), the catalogue from the Tate Modern exhibition of the same name that reprints parts of Baldwin's 1964 essay "Introduction to Exhibition of Beauford Delaney" for the Galerie Lambert in Paris; and forward-looking articles by Tyler T. Schmidt and James Smalls. Almost all of the work bringing Baldwin and Delaney together has been published in the past nine years.[62]

The chapters in the present collection underscore how the lifelong Delaney-Baldwin intellectual and familial relationship offers an extremely productive platform on which to construct new theoretical discussions about Black care, love and affect, queer and masculine identity, and synesthetic aesthetics. Both artists were sons of preachers from the American South, were prolific craftsmen who moved through many artistic genres and modes, were influenced by jazz and blues, were obsessed with the connotations of color and light, and were gay expatriates from the United States alienated by homophobia and racism that permeated society and the arts. Yet, though they shared all these commonalities, there are few studies that flesh out and historicize how Baldwin and Delaney's queer familial relation may revise how we understand Black masculinity, queer-of-color cultures, new Black aesthetics, or the development of postwar Black arts. As Delaney comes back onto the arts scene, critical race studies open up new ways to discuss the men's identities and relationships.

For example, both Baldwin and Delaney were deeply moved by jazz and explored synesthetic aesthetics—a concern of much Black aesthetic theory today. As noted in many of the chapters in the present collection, jazz appears throughout Baldwin's writing, as in his most-reprinted short story, "Sonny's Blues," and affected his writing patterns perhaps as much as did sermonic rhythms.[63] Baldwin strove to create words that rose above the marketplace and the colonial decimation of language and communication, phrases that resembled iconic images; Delaney labored to create images that spoke outside of the rules of visual representation, paintings that embodied the *jouissance* of Barthesian writing. Delaney once noted that "the painting has its own speech."[64] Delaney also spoke of "'composing and orchestrating' color" and showed his work in an exhibition called *L'âge du jazz* at the Musée Galliera in Paris in 1967.[65] Delaney illustrated W. C. Handy's *Unsung Americans Sung* (1944), a book of musical scores, poetry, sketches, essays, dramatizations, and assorted historical records that were to be seen as tributes to Black historical figures.[66] (Delaney had also painted Handy's portrait in 1939, and his large *Portrait of Harriet Tubman* [1953] may have followed from his sketch of Tubman in Handy's text.)[67] Moreover, during his lifetime, Delaney painted or sketched portraits and impressions of jazz artists such as Ethel Waters (*Ethel Waters*, 1940), Ella Fitzgerald (*Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald*, 1968; plate 26), and Charlie Parker (*Charlie Parker*, 1969, and *Charlie Parker Yardbird*, 1958; plate 10), as well as jazz clubs and jazz bands (e.g., *Jazz Quartet*, 1946). For Fred Moten, Delaney's Parisian work in fact is always marked by *sound*: his madness emerges as a synesthetic merging of voices in painted sound that manages to be a "surplus of content irreducible to identity." This surplus (the surplus meaning of Blackness itself under colonial domination, of a reference that has been denied through history) is embodied in what Delaney called his "voices" and "forces," an energy that "animates and awaits release from texts and canvases" in the form of a "phonic substance."[68] For Moten, Delaney's paintings strive to represent jazz in its fugitive resistance.

Moten reads Delaney's schizophrenia at least in part as the mark of both a historical legacy and an aesthetic radicalism: Delaney's painting is "driven by a fugitivity," a force and a sound that animates both jazz music and his canvases and lives in the impossible possibility of the voiced object.[69] Made into objects, denied subjectivity, Blackness finds vehicles of (oxymoronic) objectified resistance, giving human *objects* a new form of *agency* that moves not against or in opposition to dominance (as would a subject) but alongside

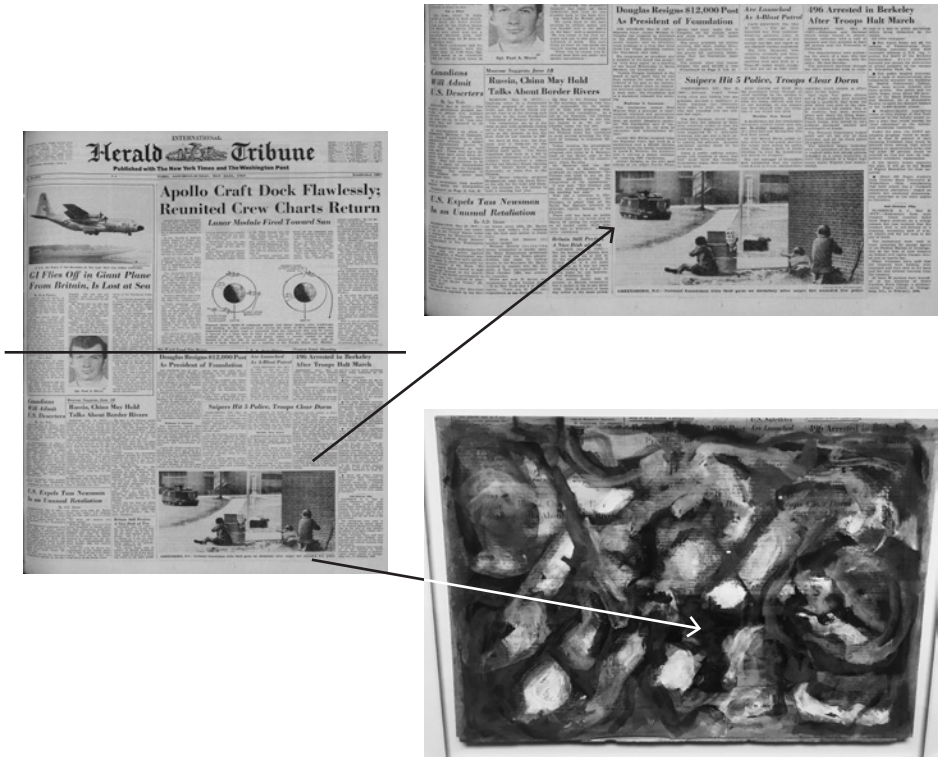
it and within it, redefining and translating it in the manner of grammatical apposition. This is not to render Black arts incomprehensible but rather to resituate them as the ground (rather than the legacy) of the avant-garde.

And in fact, both Delaney and Baldwin moved in modernist circles where formalist aestheticism was proselytized and rewarded—Delaney even more so than Baldwin, as he was the older of the two. They learned from these circles but also interrogated them, understanding that the avant-garde has been coded in art history if not as a whites-only club, then at least as a white creative rebellion with which others might join. In contrast, what Delaney and Baldwin both asserted was that "the avant-garde is a black thing" and "that blackness is an avant-garde thing."[70] For Moten, Delaney's work exemplifies how a Black Parisian cosmopolitanism underlying the European avant-garde is always marked by and speaks to "earlier migrations, arrivals, or rebirths": Delaney moves in "a multiply sited encounter between the European and African diasporas." Delaney's work gestures to how the expatriate avant-garde's move to the capital of the avant-garde, Paris, is always prefigured in early diasporic moves. Moten searches not for an opposition by artists to the colonial demand to move and speak elsewhere but for an "appositional" and "almost hidden" movement or gesture—one that is not the *spoken opposition* to the colonial aesthetic (since speech is already colonized by a colonial language and Blackness historically could not operate as pure opposition to whiteness) but "a gesture, a glance or glancing blow, that is the condition of possibility of a genuine aesthetic representation and analysis—in painting and prose—of that encounter."[71] Moten in fact reads Delaney's impasto technique—the thick layering of paint in his canvases—as a kind of glossolalia (speaking in an unknown language, or "tongues") that also is the layering sound of Black jazz music.

When we look at Baldwin's writing and hear his words in film and recordings, it is clear that this resistance is at the center of his art.[72] With Delaney, things are a bit more complicated. During his lifetime, it was difficult for Delaney to get critics to give his work the attention given to white painters, particularly those working out variations of abstract expressionism. Even Henry Miller's tribute to him privileges discussion of his Buddha-like personality over analysis of his work, as do many reviews of his work, such as the 1962 article in *Preuves* that noted, "His gaze is bright and lively like that of someone who has kept the gift of childhood. . . . Beauford-Delaney is all joy."[73] It is true that Delaney cultivated the image of the affable mentor, cosmopolitan, and bon vivant and depended upon the patronage of many

white benefactors. It is also true that he did not engage with the political sphere radically, as did his friend Baldwin. However, the racist constructions of him as primarily a Black body and affable "nature" preclude analyzing the operations of the aesthetic in his art or considering how his work and life constructed an appositional resistance to the dominant political and arts cultures in which he moved. With Moten, we need to resituate Delaney's work—masterfully re-presenting the everyday—in relation to Saidiya Hartman's claim that "defamiliarizing the familiar" manages to "illuminate the terror of the mundane and quotidian rather than exploit the shocking spectacle," and we need to walk with her as she considers "the diffusion of terror and the violence perpetrated under the rubric of pleasure, paternalism and property."[74] There are some rare glimpses at Delaney articulating this apposition: in one of the few published statements that we have by him, he wrote, "For me, black culture today means the combination of spiritual, philosophical and artistic principles traditional to these peoples who, immersed in an atmosphere of tragedy—and in particular deprived of certain rights—have nevertheless retained their dignity, their magnanimity, and their interest in the complex problems of the twentieth century. What is called black culture is in fact an amalgamation of the heritage of these peoples with other cultures in which they were forced to learn."[75] More frequently, Delaney's resistance, anger, and despair were layered into the paintings themselves—his abstractions in particular standing somewhat to the side of both the abstract expressionism sweeping the New York of his time and the dominant trends of the European avant-garde. His abstractions and antirealist portraiture strive to represent the fugitive sound of the Black diasporic resistance through symbolic placement of African or historical references, gestural iconography, and use of color.

One of Delaney's paintings, *Untitled—1969*, strikingly illustrates this, as I have noted elsewhere.[76] *Untitled—1969* is a tempera work in a four-color palette dominated by the yellows and greens that Delaney long associated with light and life. The painting was done on newspaper—specifically, the front page of the May 24–25, 1969, edition of the *International Herald Tribune*, a daily published in Paris for English-speaking readers (figures I.2a–b).[77] This would have included Delaney, who was living in Paris at the time and who never completely mastered French. Delaney painted other works on newspaper and other nontraditional materials, sometimes because he could not afford canvas, but this work seems different. Delaney has folded the page so that the official state news at the top serves as the back of the painting, and



I.2a–c

(*a and b*) Front page, below-the-fold field, *International Herald Tribune*, May 24–25, 1969. (*c*) Beauford Delaney, *Untitled—1969*, 1969. Tempera on newspaper, 11½ × 16¾ in. (29.2 × 42.5 cm). Estate of Beauford Delaney by permission of Derek L. Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator.

the bottom half serves as the top-facing "canvas," over which he paints an abstraction in yellow and greens. What is significant is that the newspaper stories on the bottom half of the page all concern political protests—specifically, the May 15 violence in Berkeley, California, on what became known as "Bloody Thursday," when Ronald Reagan sanctioned police to open fire on a large crowd of unarmed but angry protesters seeking to keep open People's Park community garden, and the 1969 Greensboro Uprising, a student protest following a May 23 assault by police and national guardsmen on students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a Black college in Greensboro. As I have previously noted in more detail,

Delaney uses only the bottom half of the paper's front page as his canvas to foreground political stories of people's uprising. In this painting, "Delaney rejects the victimization of Black men, as he scrawls his colors of life over stories of death and violence. . . . He turns language into visual art, overwriting the official voice of public news with color and form."[78]

Art historians and literary critics have repeatedly noted the importance of light effects and light imagery—particularly the color yellow—to Delaney's paintings, referencing Baldwin's now famous anecdote about learning from Delaney the properties of light as a revelation about deep seeing and mindful connection to the quotidian.[79] Delaney painted scores of portraits, for example, that demanded both a representation of a person and a simultaneous expressionistic rendering of that person's inner being (painted in yellow or light colors). Delaney's paintings of African iconography and treatment of civil rights figures such as Rosa Parks use color as discourse, imbuing abstractionist aesthetics with historical reference furtively, fugitively, through a personal symbolism that runs alongside both political representation and abstractionist values (see the color plates in this volume). In the past decade, much has been written about "the everyday," particularly in relation to postwar poetry; less has been written about how "the everyday" itself needs to be intersectionally contextualized and how it may modulate the values of modernist aestheticism in the ways that Delaney and Baldwin demanded.

In *Untitled—1969*, Delaney seems deliberately to choose a type of "canvas" that will make visible political violence related in the mundane, prosaic terms of the everyday, of newspaper reporting. But he then paints over the articles with the colors of life and liberation to create a historical palimpsest, an object worked upon and reused for another purpose. He does so only a week after Baldwin's famous television interview with Dick Cavett, on May 16, 1969, and only a few months after the publication of Baldwin's February 2, 1969, *New York Times* piece, "The Price May Be Too High."[80] Delaney's painting and Baldwin's writing both underscore the plight of the Black artist in a white supremacist world. More needs to be done to show how both of these artists attempted to create a dialogue between art and life, artworks and people, beauty and truth, politics and aesthetics. The present collection is necessary because the lives and arts of these two internationally renowned Black artists embodied new perspectives on the complexity and unique performance of Black aesthetics that we are today just beginning to see critically and to historicize.

Speculative Light: The Arts of Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin

This collection presents original work by twenty internationally acclaimed critics and artists who explore how Baldwin and Delaney together and separately speculate on the present and bet on the future as artists who embrace a reconfigured subjectivity. It asks how they create spaces in their lives and in their artworks that allow thinking anew about Blackness and the social realities in which they move and how they wager and gamble on a different future through their understanding of the power of art. The collection is both extremely focused—on the work and lives of these two artists—and theoretically wide-ranging, for contributors have been asked to address the following questions, which we hope will shape further discussion of these artists' works:

1 *Arts History and Black Aesthetics*. How should we understand the delight in, and despair with, the exploration of light and color in Baldwin's and Delaney's works and lives? What frame is needed to understand their fascination with and withdrawal from pellucidity? Richard J. Powell has written that Delaney's colors have affective charge, indicative of emotional interiority: In what ways might form and affect merge or serve new aesthetic ends in these artists' works?[81] In what ways do expressionism and abstraction contend? How might the works of Baldwin or Delaney be seen to presage new definitions of Black aesthetics, such as new definitions of synesthesia or opacity or contemporary re-visionings of Black abstraction?

2 *Music and Sonic Arts*. How might we reconfigure our understandings of the arts of these two midcentury artists—or the aesthetics of their artistic surround—in relation to the sonic arts, specifically jazz and blues but also other kinds of sonic form? In what ways does "transmedial consonance" resonate through their respective works or shared aesthetics?[82] What roles do the sonic arts play in Black modernism and postwar arts, and how might these resituate Delaney or Baldwin historically, artistically, bodily, politically?

3 *Ethics and Social Values*. How might the friendship between these men be reassessed through the lens of Black care? In what ways do mentorship and love become redefined as an aesthetic relation? How does viewing them through the lens of affect help us to re-historicize Black creativity?

4 *Style and Genre*. What are the contexts and framing discourses that might allow us to reevaluate Baldwin's and Delaney's promiscuous play with genre, style, and form? How might their expatriate wanderings and their generic wanderings demand a new descriptive vocabulary? What are the stakes of their wager on a multiplicity of expression or a polyphony of discourse, or what Fred Moten has called a "categorial blur"?

5 *Gender and Sexuality*. What can queer theory now bring to our understanding of these artists and their productions, and vice versa? On what are they speculating in their cross-generational and improvisational familial/lovers' relation? In their lives and aesthetics, what is the resonance of exile as the basis for creative erotics?[83]

These questions link history and aesthetics through the work and lives of Baldwin and Delaney. But they also provide a link between these midcentury artists and current theoretical conversations. The nineteen chapters in the present volume address different subfields in art and literary studies, not only providing the first critical treatments of Delaney's work in relation to Baldwin's oeuvre but also illustrating how the arts—particularly Black arts—can inform one another while also addressing society in a time of radical change. The chapters are eclectic, following the specializations and interests of Baldwin's and Delaney's contemporary scholarly interlocutors.

The first part of the collection, "Circuits of Selfhood," focuses on biography and redefined subjectivity as shared and contested by Baldwin and Delaney—our understanding of Delaney and Baldwin in the world and how their relation to place and to others informs their respective works. We are honored to include a chapter by David Leeming, employed in his youth as a secretary to Baldwin and later, in his professorial role, as the authorized biographer of Baldwin and author of the only biography to date of Delaney. Leeming's contribution includes some key—and moving—stories drawn from these and other sources that illustrate how intertwined were the lives and worldviews of Baldwin and Delaney, and those artists' lives with his own. Pulitzer Prize–winning author Hilton Als, who hosted the 2019 New York exhibition *God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin* at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York, contributes a meditation that he read as a keynote speaker at the 2020 Knoxville symposium, provoked by thinking about the Delaney-Baldwin friendship and queer malehood in relation to the artistic life. Ed Pavlić's chapter accounts for Baldwin's experience after

leaving Hollywood in 1969, including months when he lived with Delaney in Istanbul and reengaged his private life after a whirlwind decade publicly negotiating American racial politics. Training her eye on a more specific site, Magdalena Zaborowska explores how Baldwin was "fathered" into becoming a revolutionary writer by Delaney, his artistic mentor, as he created a unique literary household in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France, and composed toward the end of his life the "painterly" works *No Name in the Street* (1972), *The Devil Finds Work* (1976), and *Just above My Head* (1979).

The second part of the collection, "Synesthesia and Arts in Dialogue," presents chapters focused on a synesthetic approach to the arts that allows us to see how Delaney and Baldwin rethought the relations between painting, language, and music. "Synesthetic aesthetics" refers to multisensory experiments whereby one art form provokes insights into, or even is redefined as, another art form—to help audiences "hear" a painting or "see" music, for example, and thus creatively expand their perceptions of both art and the world. But a synesthetic approach also puts arts in dialogue in new ways, forcing us to consider how prose affects visual arts, or how musical rhythms and prose rhythms influence one another. In part 2 of the collection, Fred Moten considers the relationship between Delaney and Baldwin as a rigorous attention to surface, bringing together these artists' use of the colors blue, green, and yellow with the movements of the drummer in blues music. Likewise, Robert G. O'Meally explores how "the blues" is both colorful music and musical color in the two artists' works. D. Quentin Miller, in his chapter, illustrates how Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues" is a "visual story" that consistently uses the interplay between light and darkness and shows how the writer's attention to visual aesthetics was catalyzed and refined by Delaney's tutelage in the properties of light, while Walton M. Muyumba asserts a connection between the ubiquitous yellows in Delaney's work and light imagery within Baldwin's film criticism. Part 2 ends with two chapters about James Baldwin's 1976 children's book, *Little Man, Little Man: A Story of Childhood*. Building from his groundbreaking published work, Nicholas Boggs analyzes the collaboration between Baldwin and artist Yoran Cazac, the significance of the book's dedication, and how deeply Delaney's aesthetic vision influenced the final book. Robert Reid-Pharr then examines Cazac's *brulûge* (burning) painting technique and correlates this interest in fire with Delany's interest in light as the act of seeing/not seeing—a trope familiar to African American literature.

The third part, titled "Visibility, Performance, Abstraction," features chapters that focus more on the formal qualities of abstract arts. While

abstract art is often taken by the popular imagination as an obfuscation of "realism," these chapters reframe claims in part 2 to explore how abstraction can paradoxically serve as a means toward making the self visible in new ways and toward a performative identity. Contributors play with the multiple connotations of visibility: artistic and creative success within the art world, Black visibility within racist culture, the visibility of politics within an abstract and purely aesthetic art object. Indie A. Choudhury focuses on Delaney's paintings in relation to a performance of Baldwin's play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964), demonstrating how performing Blackness configured codes about race and sexuality and enabled seeing Blackness differently. Rachel Cohen considers "visibility" as self-regard and self-reflection: she performs close readings of Delaney's *Self-Portrait* (1944; plate 3) and *Untitled (Village Street Scene)* (plate 6) and the early essays of Baldwin to consider the relationships between city streets and self-regard in these artworks. Monika Gehlawat examines Delaney's daring oscillation between abstract and figurative modes of painting, using the idea of "singularity" to describe a subjective viewpoint in Delaney's figurative paintings that links to a similar viewpoint in Baldwin's confessional testimony. Moving outward from the Delaney-Baldwin pairing, Abbe Schriber argues that for Delaney intimacy was an extension of seeing. She contends that his relationships with Baldwin and other close artist friends, such as Herbert Gentry, are essential to reading Delaney's paintings, where dense chromatic surfaces create an intimacy born not only of multisensory stimuli but also of affiliations and social exchanges embodied in the complexity of color. The last two chapters in part 3 ask us to consider Delaney's painting in relation to modernist aesthetics and the problem of "influence." Levi Prombaum's chapter asks us to consider modern art personas that Delaney cultivates in his portraiture, and he contests recurring claims about Delaney's "unoriginal" use of form. Prombaum asserts that in Delaney's portraits and Baldwin's novels, an aesthetics of "feeling" resounds rather than mimics modernist aesthetics. Stephen C. Wicks in turn posits that the Delaney-Baldwin friendship might recall the relation between Giacometti and James Lord, and might translate into something he calls "the Giacometti effect" in Delaney's painting.

The collection's last part, "Continuing Influence," points to the ways that Delaney and Baldwin's speculative light continues to illuminate the arts today. Tyler T. Schmidt discusses Delaney's *Self-Portrait in a Paris Bath House* (plate 30) as an approach to queer subjectivity influencing artists such as Rotimi Fani-Kayode; he claims that Delaney's self-portrait cites and subverts European modernists' interest in African sculpture by relocating it

within the bathhouse, a site where sex is linked to "queer time." In "Complex Visions and Inspired Artists," Shawn Anthony Christian situates Baldwin's "On the Painter Beauford Delaney" as a generative text for exploring and understanding intergenerational artistic inspiration, from Delaney and Baldwin to Jesmyn Ward, Rachael Ghansah, and Kiese Laymon. The last chapter in the collection is a mediation by nationally acclaimed artist Jered Sprecher, who briefly discusses what it means for an artist today to engage with portraiture in the spirit of Delaney, as artists did in the Portrait Project at the Knoxville symposium, and he presents portraits of Fred Moten, David Leeming, Hilton Als, and Sylvia Peters that capture the feeling of Delaney's relational aesthetic.

This volume thus presents numerous points of contact and angles of vision on these artists, ranging from their personal friendship to their artistic values to their situation within culture, past and present. What is emphasized throughout is the importance of an artistic friendship between these men, reverberating out from shared living space to shared city space to shared historical space. The relationship between Baldwin and Delaney will remain somewhat obscured until all of the archives are made public, but in the meantime, we can see and cogitate upon the familial love and professional respect each gave the other, and how this changes how we understand Blackness, masculinity, sexuality, art history, and the political surround of artistic endeavor, today.

NOTES

Epigraphs: James Baldwin, "On the Painter Beauford Delaney," *Transition* 4, no. 18 (1965): 45; reprinted in "The Anniversary Issue: Selections from *Transition*, 1961–1976," special issue, *Transition,* nos. 75/76 (1997): 88–89; and in *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Library of America, 1988), 721. Pamela Wye, "Beauford Delaney," *Arts Magazine*, Summer 1991, 71. Wye reviews Philippe Briet's mini-retrospective of Delaney's work, *Beauford Delaney, a Retrospective (50 Years of Light)*. See Philippe Briet, *Beauford Delaney, a Retrospective (50 Years of Light)* (New York: P. Briet, 1991).

1 James Baldwin, "The Price of the Ticket," in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985), xii. Reprinted in, and hereafter cited from, *James Baldwin*: *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Library of America, 1998), 833.

2 Jordan Elgrably, "James Baldwin: The Art of Fiction No. 78," *Paris Review* 91 (Spring 1984): 54.

3 Information here is from David Leeming, *Amazing Grace*: *A Life of Beauford Delaney* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), particularly pages 194–97. To date there is no archival public record of Baldwin and Delaney being lovers; as far as we know, the two would remain close as mentor/protégé and friends, though Leeming's biographies of Delaney and Baldwin assert that Delaney was in love with Baldwin from the beginning of their acquaintance. See David Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography* (New York: Arcade, 1994).

4 Baldwin, "Price of the Ticket," 832.

5 James Baldwin, "On the Painter Beauford Delaney," *Transition* 4, no. 18 (1965): 45. Reprinted in "The Anniversary Issue: Selections from *Transition,* 1961–1976," special issue, *Transition*, nos. 75/76 (1997): 88–89; and in *James Baldwin, Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Library of America, 1998), 720–21.

6 Beauford Delaney, letter to Henry Miller from Ibiza, Spain, 1956, quoted in Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, 135; Beauford Delaney, journal entry, quoted in Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, 61.

7 Beauford Delaney, letter to Henry Miller, June 14, 1963, quoted in Patricia Sue Canterbury, "Transatlantic Transformations: Beauford Delaney in Paris," in *Beauford Delaney: From New York to Paris*, ed. Patricia Sue Canterbury (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2004), 61.

8 James Baldwin, "The Price May Be Too High," *New York Times*, February 2, 1969, section D, 9. Much, of course, has been written about Baldwin's construction of a secular New Jerusalem and the religious or Idealistic backgrounds to his expression and ideas; see, as just one example, Christopher Z. Hobson, *James Baldwin and the Heavenly City: Prophecy, Apocalypse, and Doubt* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.14321/j.ctv47wg3r.

9 Douglas Field, "Pentecostalism and All That Jazz: Tracing James Baldwin's Religion," *Literature and Theology* 22, no. 4 (December 2008): 436–57.

10 Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, 41.

11 Mary Schmidt Campbell, foreword to *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective*, ed. Richard A. Long (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1978), n.p.

12 On the category of "the human," see Sylvia Wynter, "No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues," *Forum NHI* 1, no. 1 (1994): 42–71; Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations," in *Sylvia*

Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis, ed. Katherine McKittrick (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 9–89.

13 Baldwin, "On the Painter Beauford Delaney," 720.

14 See Sean Kim Butorac, "Hannah Arendt, James Baldwin, and the Politics of Love," *Political Research Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (2018): 710–21.

15 On the "afterlife of slavery," see Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008); on "shoaling" as an interstitial and emerging space of becoming, see Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

16 Joan Dempsey has argued that the character Sonny in Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues" (1957) is Baldwin himself and that the mentor figure Creole is Beauford Delaney; see "Waiting for You: Beauford Delaney as James Baldwin's Inspiration for the Character Creole in 'Sonny's Blues,'" *Obsidian* 12, no.1 (2011): 60–78.

17 In "Baldwin, Bebop, and 'Sonny's Blues,'" in *Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature*, ed. Joseph Trimmer and Tilly Warnock (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1992), 165–76, Pancho Savery notes that Baldwin merges the language of freedom with the description of the jazz set and alludes to the burgeoning civil rights movement of the time: "Baldwin's concept of family is, therefore, a highly political one, and one that has cultural implications" (173). Tracey Sherard condenses Savery's point to a phrase: "Sonny, through his non-lamenting meta-narrative of jazz, claims for himself and communicates to others . . . the agency some of the more crystallized forms of the blues deny. . . . Baldwin's concept of family is, therefore, a highly political one"; "Sonny's Bebop: Baldwin's 'Blues Text' as Intracultural Critique," *African American Review* 32, no. 4 (1998): 701.

18 On care ethics within contemporary Black aesthetics and Black life, see Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

19 Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 38.

20 Leeming, *James Baldwin*, 382.

21 On "Black fungibility," see Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). *Consent not to be a single being* is the title of Moten's trilogy *Black and Blur* (2017), *Stolen Life* (2018), and *The Universal Machine* (2018).

22 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues," *Partisan Review*, Summer 1957; reprinted in *Going to Meet the Man* (New York: Dial, 1965), 139.

23 Fred Moten, *Black and Blur* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 11, 19.

24 This language is taken from Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

25 The blossoming of scholarship on Baldwin is exemplified by conferences devoted to his work, such as the International James Baldwin Conference at the American University in Paris, May 26–28, 2016; "'The Evidence of Things Not Seen': Queering Europe with James Baldwin," February 22–23, 2018, Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Studies ICFG, University of Bern; the James Baldwin Conference in Saint-Paul-de-Vence in 2020; the International Conference on James Baldwin at the Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen, Nice, in 2022. The nonprofit organization La Maison Baldwin (https://www.lamaisonbaldwin.org/) holds an annual writers' workshop-conference, with trips to Baldwin sites, and has a popular Facebook page. Important for scholarly work is the open-access journal *James Baldwin Review*, inaugurated in 2015 by Manchester University Press and edited by Douglas Field, Justin A. Joyce, and Dwight A. McBride. For a listing of notable Baldwin scholarship within specific time frames, see the *James Baldwin Review*'s annual "Trends in James Baldwin Criticism."

26 "James Baldwin Papers 1936–1992," New York Public Library Archives and Manuscripts, https://archives.nypl.org/scm/24143#access_use. Baldwin's estate sold the papers to the Schomberg Center in 2017; these include a typescript by Baldwin of unpublished notes on Delaney, according to Jennifer Schuessler, "James Baldwin's Archive, Long Hidden, Comes (Mostly) Into View," *New York Times*, April 12, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/12/arts/james-baldwins-archive-long-hidden-comes-mostly-into-view.html.

27 Justin A. Joyce, Dwight A. McBride, and Douglas Field, "Baltimore Is Still Burning: The Rising Relevance of James Baldwin," *James Baldwin Review* 1, no. 1 (2015): 4, https://www.manchesterhive.com/view/journals/jbr/1/1/jbr.1.issue-1.xml. The authors cite, among other works, D. Quentin Miller's edited volume *Re-Viewing James Baldwin: Things Not Seen* (2000); Herb Boyd's biography *Baldwin's Harlem* (2008); Magdalena Zaborowska's *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade* (2009); Randall Kenan's edited volume of Baldwin's uncollected writings, *The Cross of Redemption* (2010); Cora Kaplan and Bill Schwarz's edited collection *James Baldwin: America and Beyond* (2011); D. Quentin Miller's *A Criminal Power: James Baldwin and the Law* (2012); Matt Brim's *James Baldwin and the Queer Imagination* (2014); Douglas Field's *All Those Strangers: The Art and Lives of James Baldwin* (2015); and Michele Elam's edited collection, *The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin* (2015).

28 See Julie Beth Napolin, "On *Blues Speaker [for James Baldwin]*: A Conversation with Mendi and Keith Obadike," *Social Text Online*, August 21, 2018, https://socialtextjournal.org/on-blues-speaker-for-james-baldwin-a-conversation-with-mendi-and-keith-obadike/.

29 For Baldwin's relevance during the period 2016 to 2020, see, for example, Jesmyn Ward, *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race* (New York: Scribner's, 2016), the title of which echoes Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1963); Darryl Pinckney's review of Ward, "Catching Up to James Baldwin," *New York Review of Books*, May 25, 2017, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/05/25/catching-up-to-james-baldwin/; and Eddie S. Glaude Jr.'s bestselling *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* (New York: Crown, 2020).

30 Darryl Pinckney, Rich Blint, and Brian Meachum introduced *James Baldwin Abroad: A Program of 3 Films*, Film Forum, New York, January 2023, https://filmforum.org/film/james-baldwin-abroad. The films shown were Horace Ové, dir., *Baldwin's Nigger* (1968); Terence Dixon, dir., *Meeting the Man: James Baldwin in Paris* (1970); and Sedat Pakay, dir., *James Baldwin: From Another Place* (1973).

30

31 Rebecca Rubin, "Billy Porter to Star in James Baldwin Biopic," *Variety*, April 12, 2023, https://variety.com/2023/film/news/billy-porter-james-baldwin-biopic-1235580508/.

32 LeRoy McClain played Shy Baldwin (vocals by Darius de Haas) in *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (2017–23), which was created by Amy Sherman-Palladino for Amazon Prime and won twenty-four Primetime Emmys. For Baldwin on Twitter, see Melanie Walsh, "Tweets of a Native Son: The Quotation and Recirculation of James Baldwin from Black Power to #BlackLivesMatter," *American Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2018): 531–59.

33 Schuessler, "James Baldwin's Archive."

34 Richard Avedon and James Baldwin, *Nothing Personal* (Los Angeles: Taschen, 2017); *God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin*, curated by Hilton Als, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2019, https://www.davidzwirner.com/exhibitions/god-made-my-face-collective-portrait-james-baldwin.

35 On Glenn Ligon, *Stranger (Full Text) #1* (2020–21), see *Glenn Ligon: First Contact*, Hauser and Wirth, 2021, https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/29232-glenn-ligon-first-contact/. See also Ligon's *Untitled (James Baldwin)* (1990), oil on canvas, 6¼ × 84 in. (15.9 × 213.4 cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Seth K. Sweetser Fund, 1991.546. For other artworks mentioned, see Don Bachardy, *James Baldwin* (1964), graphite and brush and black on cream wove paper, 30⅛ × 22 1/16 in. (76.5 × 56 cm), Art Institute of Chicago, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/259846/james-baldwin; Jack Witten, *Black Monolith I, a Tribute to James*

Baldwin (1988), Glenstone, Potomac, MD, https://www.glenstone.org/search/black+monolith; and Garrett Rittenberg, *Portrait of James Baldwin* (2018), acrylic on canvas, 27⅞ × 22 in. (70.8 × 55.9 cm), https://onlineonly.christies.com/s/collection-andre-leon-talley-online/garrett-rittenberg-20th-21st-century-183/174291. For discussions of Baldwin and the contemporary arts, see, for instance, Monika Gehlawat, "Strangers in the Village: James Baldwin, Teju Cole, and Glenn Ligon," *James Baldwin Review* 5 (2019): 48–72, https://doi.org/10.7227/JBR.5.4; and Shawn Anthony Christian's chapter in this volume.

36 Susan Vogel, introduction to *Perspectives: Angles on African Art,* ed. Susan Vogel (New York: Center for African Art; Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 12.

37 James Baldwin, "James Baldwin," in Vogel, *Perspectives*, 115.

38 Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, 182.

39 Jewell Handy Gresham, "James Baldwin Comes Home," *Essence*, June 1976; reprinted in *Conversations with James Baldwin*, ed. Fred L. Standley and Louis H. Pratt (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), 163.

40 Henry Miller, *The Amazing and Invariable Beauford DeLaney* (New York: Alicat Book Shop, 1945); reprinted in *Remember to Remember* (New York: New Directions, 1947), 15–34; and reprinted in part in Long, *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective*.

According to the program for the exhibition at the Centre Culturel Américain, the seven paintings by Delaney on display were *Portrait of Jean Genet, Shaman, Portrait of Ambrose, Yellow Abstraction, Madame de Chaillot, Autumn*, and *Portrait of Henry Miller*. See *Henry Miller 80* (Paris: Centre Culturel Américain, 1971). The title page of the program reads: "L'Université de Californie à Los Angeles lui rend en ce moment un tribut officiel auquel assistent nombre de ses amis. Bien d'autres ne peuvent être présents et c'est pour cela que nous avons organisé cette modeste manifestation avec et pour ses amis à Paris. . . . Cette exposition est le témoignage de cette amitié, une salutation à celui qui en retour leur rend hommage" (The University of California at Los Angeles is paying him an official tribute at this moment, which many of his friends are attending. Many others cannot be present and that is why we have organized this modest demonstration with and for his friends in Paris. . . . This exhibition is the testimony of this friendship, a greeting to the one who in return pays them homage). Translation mine.

41 Jean-José Marchand, "Enquête sur la culture noire," *Preuves*, May 1958, 33–44. Delaney's is the shortest of the responses from this eclectic group.

42 See Mary Schmidt Campbell, foreword to Long, *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective*, n.p. See the bibliography in this volume for a listing of

substantial considerations of Delaney's work that have appeared in exhibition catalogues, such as essays by Maija Brennan, Mary Campbell, Patricia Sue Canterbury, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Ann E. Gibson, David Leeming, Richard A. Long, Michael D. Plante, Richard Powell, Levi Prombaum, Joyce Henri Robinson, Lowery Stokes Sims, Catherine St. John, Stephen C. Wicks, and Yolanda Wood.

43 Ted Joans, "Beauford Delaney," *Black World/Negro Digest* 23, no. 3 (January 1974): 93. This article features a photo of Joans visiting with Delaney.

44 Ted Joans, *In Thursday Sane,* ed. Sandra McPherson (Davis, CA: Swan Scythe Press, 2001).

45 For chronologies of exhibitions of Delaney's work, see *Beauford Delaney: Liquid Light, Paris Abstractions, 1954–1970* (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1999), 51–52; "Beauford Delaney (1901–1979)," in *Stroke! Beauford Delaney, Norman Lewis and Alma Thomas* (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 2000), 52; Sylvain Briet, "Chronology of Exhibitions," in *Beauford Delaney: From New York to Paris*, ed. Patricia Sue Canterbury (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2004), 125–31. The Wells International Foundation has also created a timeline to accompany its online exhibition; see Maija Brennan, *Beauford Delaney: A Study in Portraiture*, Wells International Foundation, 2019, https://wellsinternationalfoundation.org/portraiture-exhibition/.

46 Delaney's relationship with the Facchettis began in the fall of 1956, when they included his work in group shows and bought several works; they held a one-man show for him in June 1960 that featured only his abstractions. See the discussion of this show in Leeming, *Amazing Grace*, 142–43; and "Beauford's Solo Show at the Paul Facchetti Gallery," *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), May 30, 2015, http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/2015/05/beaufords-solo-show-at-paul-facchetti.html.

47 On the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery's support of Delaney's work, see Monique Y. Wells, "Beauford and the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery," *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), March 2, 2010, http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/2010/03/beauford-and-michael-rosenfeld-gallery.html. For the 2022 exhibition, see the catalogue *Be Your Wonderful Self: The Portraits of Beauford Delaney*, ed. halley k harrisburg and Matthew Newton (West Haven, CT: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery and GHP Media, 2022).

48 Cid Corman, *Tributary: Poems*, ed. Philippe Briet (New York: Edgewise Press, 1999); for references to Miller and Baldwin, see the poem "Pastel," 19.

Philippe Briet opened his eponymous gallery in SoHo, Manhattan, in 1987 and mounted the first Delaney exposition since 1978, titled *Beauford Delaney (1901–1979): From Tennessee to Paris*, in November 1988.

Philippe and his brother Sylvain Briet then organized two further retrospectives: *Beauford Delaney, a Retrospective (50 Years of Light)* (1991) and *Beauford Delaney: The New York Years* (1994). See Monique Y. Wells, "Beauford and the Briet Brothers," *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), January 27, 2010, http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/2010/01/beauford-and-briet-brothers.html.

49 See Monique Y. Wells, "Welcome," *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), December 14, 2009, http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/2009/12/welcome.html. The film is to be directed by Zachary James Miller and produced by Monique Y. Wells and Bruce Aitken; see https://zacharyjames9.wixsite.com/website.

50 See The Delaney Project: Gathering Light, https://thedelaneyproject.org/.

51 On plans for the museum, see "The Future Delaney Museum at Beck: Last Remaining Ancestral Home of Beauford Delaney," Beck Cultural Exchange Center, https://www.beckcenter.net/delaney-museum-at-beck.

52 *Beauford Delaney: A Folio of Notecards* (Richmond, VA: Pomegranate Press, 2015).

53 Adrianna Campbell, "Glenn Ligon: Glenn Ligon Speaks about His Curatorial Project 'Encounters and Collisions,'" *Artforum*, June 5, 2015, https://www.artforum.com/interviews/glenn-ligon-speaks-about-his-curatorial-project-encounters-and-collisions-52580; Monique Y. Wells, "Beauford Delaney and Paris: Evolution of an Exhibition," in *Beauford Delaney: Resonance of Form and Vibration of Color* (Paris: Columbia Global Centers, 2016), 42; "Video Explorations of Beauford's Life and Art," *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com; *God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin*, curated by Hilton Als, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2019, https://www.davidzwirner.com/exhibitions/god-made-my-face-collective-portrait-james-baldwin.

54 Moten, *In the Break*. For new approaches to Delaney, see Christopher Capozzola, "Beauford Delaney and the Art of Exile," *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide* 10, no. 5 (2003): 10–12; Edward Field, "With Beauford Delaney," *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide* 11, no. 3 (2004): 4; Catherine St. John, "Reality and Aesthetics: A Marxist and Crocean Interpretation of the Paintings of Beauford Delaney," *NAAAS Conference Proceedings* (Scarborough, ME: National Association of African American Studies, 2001), 397–414; and Catherine St. John, "A Narrative of Belonging: The Art of Beauford Delaney and Glenn Ligon," in *Proceeding for the School of Visual Arts Eighteenth Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists: Art and Story,* ed. Sherry Stone, 43–50, https://www.academia.edu/1411170/INTERPRETATION_NARRATIVE_AND_THE_STUDENTS_SEARCH_FOR_AN_ARTISTS_INTENTIONS.

55 Moten, *In the Break*, 171.

56 Baldwin, "Price of the Ticket," 831, 832.

57 Rachel Cohen, "Beauford Delaney and W. E. B. Du Bois" and "Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin," in *A Chance Meeting: Intertwined Lives of American Writers and Artists, 1854–1967* (New York: Random House, 2004), 182–88, 220–28.

58 *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, directed by Karen Thorsen, produced by Karen Thorsen and William Miles (DKDmedia, 1989), film, 1 hr. 27 min.

59 Leeming, *Amazing Grace*; and Leeming, *James Baldwin*.

60 Stephen C. Wicks, "Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin: A Selected Timeline," in *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin: Through the Unusual Door*, ed. Stephen C. Wicks (Knoxville: Knoxville Museum of Art, 2020), xv–xxi. Wicks has also hosted a four-part virtual tour of the exhibition and discussion of the Delaney-Baldwin relationship; videos are available on YouTube and at https://knoxart.org/exhibitions/beauford-delaney-and-james-baldwin-through-the-unusual-door/.

61 David Butler, foreword to Wicks, *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin*, vii.

62 Wicks, *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin*; Cohen, "Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin," in *A Chance Meeting*, 220–28; Dempsey, "Waiting for You"; Glenn Ligon, "From Letter to Beauford Delaney," in *Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions, Exhibition Notes*, Nottingham Contemporary, 2015, https://cms.nottinghamcontemporary.org/site/assets/files/1486/exhibition_notes_glenn_ligon__encounters_and_collisions.pdf; "Glenn Ligon to Beauford Delaney: Two Letters," in Wicks, *Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin*, xxiii–xxiv; Monique Y. Wells, "Brief Musings on Beauford and James Baldwin," *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), December 1, 2010, http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/2010/12/brief-musings-on-beauford-and-james.html; Mark Godfrey and Zoe Whitley, "Beauford Delaney and James Baldwin," in *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, ed. Mark Godfrey and Zoe Whitley (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), 116–17; Tyler Schmidt, "Lessons in Light: Beauford Delaney's and James Baldwin's 'Unnameable Objects,'" in *Of Latitudes Unknown: James Baldwin's Radical Imagination*, ed. Alice Mikal Craven (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 49–68; James Smalls, "Picturing Jimmy, Picturing Self: James Baldwin, Beauford Delaney, and the Color of Light," in Craven, *Of Latitudes Unknown*, 35–48.

63 The literature discussing Baldwin, jazz, and blues is significant. See discussions and bibliographies in Walton M. Muyumba, *The Shadow and the Act: Black Intellectual Practice, Jazz Improvisation, and Philosophical Pragmatism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Ed Pavlić, *Who Can Afford to Improvise? James Baldwin and Black Music, the Lyric*

and the Listeners (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015); and the significant work done by Robert G. O'Meally as the founder and director of the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University, https://jazz.columbia.edu. One can find extensive programming online related to Baldwin and jazz, often documented on sites such as YouTube.

64 Quoted in Richard A. Long, "Interview with RAL," in Long, *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective*, n.p.

65 Campbell, foreword to Long, *Beauford Delaney: A Retrospective*, n.p.

66 As noted by Handy in his dedication to W. C. Handy, ed., *Unsung Americans Sung* (New York: American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers, 1944).

67 See Delaney's portrait of Handy in harrisburg and Newton, *Be Your Wonderful Self*. For a discussion of the Tubman portrait in relation to the sketch and the Delaney's probable source for it, see Monique Y. Wells, *Les Amis de Beauford Delaney* (blog), "Les Amis Celebrates Women's History Month, Part 4," http://lesamisdebeauforddelaney.blogspot.com/2021/03/.

68 Moten, *In the Break*, 35.

69 Moten, *In the Break*, 35.

70 Moten, *In the Break*, 32.

71 Moten, *In the Break*, 34.

72 See Monika Gehlawat, "Baldwin and the Role of the Citizen Artist," *James Baldwin Review* 8, no. 1 (2022), https://doi.org/10.7227/JBR.8.6.

73 Jean Grenier, "Beauford Delaney," *Preuves*, June 1962, 75–76. The full passage reads:

> Et son regard est lumineux et vif comme celui de quelqu'un qui a gardé le don de l'enfance. On sent que s'il vous connaissait mieux il aimerait à jouer avec vous, sans arrière-pensée, pour s'amuser, pour vous amuser. Il se retient parce que vous venez de lui être présenté, mais sa mimique est expressive, ses veux pétillent de malice, il vous fait des signes d'intelligence. Comme vous vous sentez âgé à côté de lui, quel soit votre âge! La croyance, l'espérance, l'amour paraissent naturels et faciles auprès de lui. Je n'oublie pas que son père était pasteur dans cette région du Sud-Tennessee où il est né. . . . Beauford-Delaney est tout allégresse. . . . Beauford-Delaney est du côté de la vie dansante et chantante.
>
> His gaze is bright and lively like that of someone who has kept the gift of childhood. We feel that if he knew you better he would like to play with you, without delay, just for fun, to have fun. He restrains himself because you have just been introduced to him, but his mimicry is

expressive, his eyes sparkle with mischief, he makes signs of intelligence. How old you feel next to him, whatever your age! Belief, hope, love seem natural and easy to him. I don't forget that his father was a pastor in that part of South Tennessee where he was born. . . . Beauford-Delaney is all joy. . . . Beauford-Delaney is on the side of the dancing and singing life. (Translation mine.)

74 Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4; quoted in Moten, *In the Break*, 4–5.

75 Beauford Delaney, "Les valeurs humaines amalgament tout l'heritage du passe" (Human values amalgamate all the heritage of the past), answer to question no. 1, within set of interviews by Jean-José Marchand, "Enquête sur la culture noire," *Preuves*, May 1958, 44 (translation mine). The original text reads: "Pour moi, la culture noire signifie aujourd'hui la combinaison des principes spirituels, philosophiques et artistiques traditionnnels a ces peuples qui, plonges dans une atmosphere de tragedie—et en particulier prives de certains droits—ont neanmoins garde leur dignite, leur magnanimite et leur interet pour les problemes complexes du xx siecle. Ce qu'on appelle culture noire est en fait un amalgame de l'heritage de ces peuples avec d'autres cultures auxquelles ils furent contraints de s'initier."

76 Amy J. Elias, "Inappropriate Edges: Beauford Delaney's *Untitled-1969*," *ASAP/J*, May 22, 2023, https://asapjournal.com/hard-soft-lost-the-edges-of-contemporary-culture-inappropriate-edges-beauford-delaneys-untitled-1969-amy-j-elias/.

77 *International Herald Tribune*, May 24–25, 1969, 1.

78 Elias, "Inappropriate Edges."

79 See Richard J. Powell, "The Color of Ecstasy," in *Beauford Delaney: The Color Yellow* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2002), 13–31; see also Baldwin, "On the Painter Beauford Delaney."

80 On the interview with Cavett, see, for instance, Jamill W. Drake, "James Baldwin: Witnessing in Dark Times," *Marginalia*, September 24, 2021, https://themarginaliareview.com/james-baldwin-witnessing-in-dark-times/.

81 See Powell, "Color of Ecstasy."

82 *Transmedial consonance* is term used by Brent Hayes Edwards in *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 7.

83 For the term *creative erotics*, see Magdalena J. Zaborowska, *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade: Erotics of Exile* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).