

# A CALLALOO CALL FOR PAPERS: Elegy

*Callaloo* invites papers for a special issue on Elegy guest edited by Joshua Bennett (Harvard University).

*Who cannot think  
our elegies are endless endlessly  
and the words  
we put to them too often unheard and hurried?*

—Terrance Hayes

*We don't die. We multiply.*

—Robin Harris

## **Project Description:**

How do those said to be dead already mourn? Given the recent critical turns toward theories of social death (Patterson, Wilderson, Sexton), civic death (Dayan), and necropolitics (Mbembe) as ways of thinking the enfleshed, material effects of slavery and its afterlives—as well as the long history within black expressive cultures globally of thinking life and nonlife not as antipodal points of a set binary, but rather overlapping modalities always already in flux—how might we enlist the resources that literatures of the African diaspora make available in order to theorize death and dying, life and living, anew? Put somewhat differently, in the midst of a historical moment marked by the serial repetition of images of black death, or else black life under extreme duress, black life in constant flight from the laser-like precision of modernity's glare, what can elegy offer? How might it function not only as an occasion for gathering and remembrance, but also as an instrument of abolition; a means through which we might meditate on the lives of the fallen, as well as imagine a world liberated from the myriad forms of systemic violence that make those at the bottommost rungs of the racial caste system ostensibly ungrievable? Those who, as Audre Lorde reminds us, were never meant to survive?

Thus, in the spirit of both Conrad Kent Rivers's claim that "to live day by day/is not to live at all" and Gwendolyn Brooks's call in "Second Sermon on the Warpland" to "Nevertheless, live," this special issue of *Callaloo* will accept essays, poetry, and visual art on the following range of topics:

- Elegy in the African Diaspora
- Theories of social death, social life
- Thanatopoetics
- Abolitionist thought
- Racial discourses of life philosophy
- Mourning & melancholia
- Funereal practices throughout the African Diaspora

- Death & performance
- Death & the posthuman
- Death & the speculative

**Callaloo Submission Guidelines:**

Manuscripts must be submitted online through the *Callaloo* manuscript submission system by **February 24, 2017**. Please see the submission guidelines here: <http://callaloo.expressacademic.org/login.php>. In order to submit a manuscript, you must register with the online system. The registration process will only take a few minutes. All manuscripts will follow the usual review process for submissions, and the *Callaloo* editor makes all final editorial decisions. Please note all manuscripts must follow the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) and include in-text citations, a works cited, and endnotes for any commentary.

Please direct questions or other correspondence to the Guest Editor for this issue: Joshua Bennett ([Joshua.b.bennett@gmail.com](mailto:Joshua.b.bennett@gmail.com))

**Guest Editor:**

Dr. Joshua Bennett is the author of *The Sobbing School* (Penguin, 2016). He holds a Ph.D. in English from Princeton University and an M.A. in Theatre and Performance Studies from the University of Warwick, where he was a Marshall Scholar. In 2010, Dr. Bennett delivered the Commencement Address at the University of Pennsylvania, from which he graduated with the distinctions of Phi Beta Kappa and *magna cum laude*.

Winner of the 2015 National Poetry Series, Dr. Bennett has received fellowships from the CALLALOO CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP, Cave Canem, the Josephine de Karman Fellowship Trust, and the Ford Foundation. His writing has been published or is forthcoming in *Boston Review*, *Callaloo*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Poetry* and elsewhere. He is currently a Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows at Harvard University.