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Bone Deep - Poetics, Presence & Memory in Black Diasporic Imagination

Collaborative Book Review

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The Black Geographic - Praxis, Resistance, Futurity
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Abstract Building from the foundational work of Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, Black Geographies is a field that critiques dominant ideas of Blackness and Black people as "ungeographic" by starting with an understanding that Blackness is always historically and geographically situated. It is a field that resists descriptive studies that reproduce Black suffering and Black death, and instead emphasizes Black livingness and humanness. Jovan Scott Lewis and Camilla Hawthorne's new edited anthology, *The Black Geographic: Praxis, Resistance, Futurity* (2023), introduces students, scholars, and researchers from varying disciplines to both the groundwork and expanding edges of Black geographic study. Starting the review with a conversation between the two authors' experiences and analyses of Harriet Jacobs' "the loophole of retreat," this piece explores how Black geographic study creates epistemological and ontological spaces of freedom and autonomy. We consider how these ruptures push against colonial ways of thinking, knowing, and being, and how Black geographic study produces alternative ways of thinking, knowing, and imaging the world. This review considers how the anthology asks and answers the following questions: Where do Black people take and find refuge? Where does our livingness emerge, and where do we make our freedom? Where do we make memory and create rhythms for our lives outside the ruins of colonialism?

Résumé S'appuyant sur les travaux fondamentaux de Katherine McKittrick et Clyde Woods, la « Black Geographies » est un domaine qui critique les idées dominantes selon lesquelles la *Blackness* et les Noirs sont « non géographiques », en partant du principe que la *blackness* est toujours située historiquement et

géographiquement. C'est un domaine qui s'oppose aux études descriptives qui reproduisent la souffrance et la mort des Noirs et qui met plutôt l'accent sur la vie et l'humanité des Noirs. La nouvelle anthologie éditée par Jovan Scott Lewis et Camilla Hawthorne, *The Black Geographic: Praxis, Resistance, Futurity* (2023), présente aux étudiants, aux universitaires et aux chercheurs de diverses disciplines les fondements et les perspectives de l'étude géographique Noire. Commençant par une conversation entre les deux auteurs sur leurs expériences et leurs analyses de « la faille de la retraite », cet article explore comment l'étude de la géographie Noire crée des espaces épistémologiques et ontologiques de liberté et d'autonomie qui s'opposent aux modes de pensée, de connaissance et d'être coloniaux, et fait émerger d'autres façons de penser, de connaître et d'imaginer le monde. Cette critique examine comment l'anthologie pose et répond aux questions suivantes : « Où les Noirs trouvent-ils refuge ? Où notre vitalité émerge-t-elle et où trouvons-nous notre liberté ? Où créons-nous des souvenirs et des rythmes pour nos vies en dehors des ruines du colonialisme ? »

Keywords Black geographies; diaspora; poetics; Afrofuturism; imagination

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Enter: The Loophole

Question: What does the memory of Harriet Jacobs and her “loophole of retreat” conjure for you?

shah noor: When I think of Harriet Jacobs, a Black woman who escaped slavery by hiding within the attic of her grandmother’s shed, I think about how, for seven years, she watched her children work the land she fled; in the ruins of her own freedom, she sought reprieve in the small attic. When I think about Harriet Jacobs, I think of my own father, who was just out of high school in Sudan and brimming with dreams of liberated futures when he received the notice of a military coup. I think of the worry in his heart, as he recalled petitions he signed against the army that led this assault, his name on documents that included titles like “socialist” and “communist,” the evidence of his fight for freedom. I think of my young, eventually-to-be father, fleeing his town, going north to his grandmother’s, to seek refuge in her attic. He stayed in hiding for three weeks while the military searched for him with the intent to forcibly conscript him into army service and break his revolutionary spirit for daring to speak truth to power. If it were not for this attic, this loophole away from state-sanctioned surveillance and violence, where would I be? If it were not for this attic, where would Jacobs—who, from the garret of an enslaver’s home, found her freedom—be in our collective memory? I think about abolitionist futures, and how our loopholes of freedom can and will be constructed from within the plantation, the colony, the prison, and the university.

Ki'Amber: This prompt takes me back to Fall 2017, when I was a 21-year-old college senior relentlessly writing my undergraduate thesis. From the recommendation of a peer mentor, I took a break from my writing to attend the first Black Geographies conference at UC Berkeley. I did not know what to expect as I was unfamiliar with Black Geographies as a discipline, but after an hour of listening to a panel with Sharita Towne, Lisa Bates, Lindsey Dillon, Jessica Walker, C.N.E. Corbin, Judith Madera, Todne Thomas, and Camilla Hawthorne, I realized I had walked into a "loophole of retreat" within the academy—a space where I felt a sense of belonging and could study, imagine, plan, and practice freedom. That 2017 conference taught me that Black Geographies is an interdisciplinary field, ranging in geographic scope and scale, including a range of spaces and places, and a diversity of methodologies. For example, Lisa Bates, in the discipline of Urban Studies and Urban Planning, asked, "what does it look like, spatially, when Portland loves Black people?" Transdisciplinary artist, Sharita Towne responded by using visual and art methodologies in her Black geographic work in Portland. Willie Jamaal Wright was thinking with the mountains, swamps, and tunnels that enslaved Africans, Zapatistas, and Vietnamese folks used and retreated to create free communities. The conference ended with a panel on the capaciousness of Black liberation praxis, followed by the keynote talk by Katherine McKittrick, professor of Gender Studies. That conference ended up being foundational to my undergraduate thesis, opening new questions for me—specifically, Lindsey Dillon's and Lisa Bates's presentations at the conference led me to consider an alternative genealogy of environmental justice that centered Black abolitionist thought and Black life. Many of the scholars from that first conference show up in *The Black Geographic: Praxis, Resistance, and Futurity* (2023), an anthology that demonstrates the capaciousness of the field of Black Geographies, co-edited by Camilla Hawthorne and Jovan Scott Lewis.

shah noor: The loophole reminds us that "Blackness does not represent an incommensurable 'outside' to systems of spatial domination" but rather, Blackness articulates new modes of living from within crumbling empires (Hawthorne and Lewis 2023, 9). *The Black Geographic* introduces students, scholars, and researchers from varying disciplines to both the foundations and expanding edges of Black geographic study. A field unbounded by location, nation-states, and borders, Black geographic thought continuously redeploys itself into new spaces, in-between spaces, and the spaces we are told are empty. Utilizing loopholes, poetics, counter-movements, and refusals as a patchwork stitched together in quilts, the authors in this volume consider how Black Geographies can retrieve the past, the unseen, and the understudied. Highlighting multidisciplinary methods, such as ethnography, creative expression, and archival research, contributors in *The Black Geographic* reflect on both the presences and absences of Blackness and underscore their commitment to expanding the

regions and communities addressed by Black geographic study. One strength of *The Black Geographic* is its attention to the diasporic roots and routes of globally and locally produced Blackness, and, as we will highlight in this review, the poetic, archival, and artistic contributions and products of Black geographic thought. Conjuring Katherine McKittrick (2006) and Harriet Jacobs (1861) in their introduction, Hawthorne and Lewis remind us that within the field of Black Geographies "racism '[shapes], but [does] not wholly define, Black worlds,'" foregrounding "loopholes of retreat" as geographies through which imperial domination is subverted and challenged (2023, 9). This leads us to consider: where do Black people take and find refuge? Where does our livingness emerge? How do we make our freedom? Where do we make memories and create new rhythms for our lives outside the ruins of colonialism?

Methods and Framing

The Black Geographic explores the epistemological and methodological approaches within Black Geographies and the diversity of Black place-making praxis globally. Building from the foundational work by Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, Black geographies is a field that critiques dominant ideas of Blackness and Black peoples as "ungeographic". It resists descriptive studies that reproduce Black suffering and Black death by starting with an understanding that Blackness is always historically and geographically situated (Hawthorne and Lewis 2023, 3) and centering Black livingness.[1] In this edited volume, Hawthorne and Lewis frame Black Geographies as making three interventions. First, by defining and engaging with Blackness beyond subjectivity and the body (while not discarding these engagements) by offering a framework of relationality, understanding Blackness as produced in relation to place and as a force that produces place. Second, in contrast to conventional geography which fails to adequately engage with "the production of race and racisms via the production of space" (2023, 2), Black geographic praxis foregrounds the spatialization of race and racialization of space and challenges the idea that "spatial theory only happens within geography departments" (2023, 4). And finally, by centering methodologies that combine the material and the poetic.

Hawthorne and Lewis argue that the core epistemological concern across Black Geographies is that "all knowledge is geographically situated" and that this is a powerful

[1] Black livingness is a concept from Katherine McKittrick's Black geographic thought in her book, Dear Science (2021). Black livingness is an ethics and method of "noticing" how Black people make life in relation to creative and intellectual practice within, against, and beyond structures of oppression. It is how Black people tell stories about our lives, the places we live, and the universe. It is the "creative, intellectual, physiological, and neurological labor" of Black liberation (McKittrick 2021, 50).

"point from which to theorize" (2023, 4). This reading of Black Geographies' core epistemological concern is an important intellectual intervention in academic scholarship relevant to all disciplines, and in political organizing, because it pushes us to spatialize our knowledge. One might ask, if all knowledge is geographically situated, why focus on Blackness or Black geographic knowledge? Hawthorne and Lewis emphasize that Blackness has been "central to the articulation of racist, colonial spatial imaginaries and practices," which have produced death and destruction for not only Black peoples, but for other racialized groups and for the planet (2023, 10). Blackness is therefore an important analytical location to challenge racist, colonial spatial imaginaries and practices, and articulate "different modes of living" and world-making (Hawthorne and Lewis 2023, 10). In a world built on anti-Blackness, studying Black geographic practices of living and world-making on Black terms is not only resistance, but also the emergence of alternative ways of thinking, knowing, practicing, and imagining life, including how we relate to space and place. Studying Black geographies on Black terms can allow us to imagine and make worlds that are not merely inhabitable for Black people, but that love Black people. Furthermore, Black geographies articulate spatial imaginaries and practices that move us toward a more livable and sustainable world for all.

Section & Chapter Breakdown

In "Part One: Praxis," the authors focus on the poetic, material, and affective dimensions of Black life as well as the important role of imagination in Black geographic practice. Several contributors to *The Black Geographic* demonstrate the significance of a Black spatial imaginary. Danielle Purifoy's chapter, "Call Us Alive Someplace: Du Boisian Methods and Living Black Geographies," is a study of how W.E.B. Du Bois's novel *Silver Fleece* combines real and imagined geographies in Lowndes County, Alabama, foregrounding Black spatial practices of making "what *could be* from what *is*" (2023, 28; original emphasis). Purifoy argues for scholars doing Black Geographies to use Du Boisian methodology because it engages the political, economic, and poetic to study Black life on its own terms. Du Boisian methodology reveals that knowledge is not just based on what can be observed, experienced, and measured, but knowledge is also what can be imagined. The role of the imaginary in Du Bois's work is not escapism or a denial of reality, but confronting reality with a commitment to live otherwise.

Within Black geographic praxis there is a commitment to precision – understanding the nuances of Black life, including those that may not be measurable or knowable – as well as a refusal of a colonial desire to know. In *Poetics of Relation*, Édouard Glissant argues for the

right to opacity because there can be violence in knowing, legibility, and politics of recognition. Several contributors to *The Black Geographic* use poetics, which inhabits opacity within the study of the rhythm, ruin, and memory of Black life. Saidiya Hartman describes poetics as "that inhabitation of opacity and refusal of the imposition of a certain kind of sense-making project," which is key to producing otherwise worlds (2020). In *The Black Geographic*, Purifoy uses Du Boisian methodology in her project, "In Conditions of Fresh Water" by bridging "the structural analysis of social science with the poetic imaginary of visual abstraction" (2023, 35). She finds that this methodology requires precision to "the nuances of Black lives and geographies that cannot be measured" (2023, 46). In Judith Madera's chapter, "Shaking the Basemap," readers are introduced to "early narratives from the long epoch of abolition" through the poetics of spiritual texts, exploratory accounts of slavery, and narratives from fugitive enslaved Africans (2023, 50). Drawing from sources like newspapers, fiction books, editorials, letters, and local histories, Madera argues for an abolitionist print geography that utilizes critical archival studies to map the impact of discourse on place-making (2023, 66).

Chiyuma Elliot's close reading of C.S. Giscombe's book-length poem, *Here*, in the chapter "My Bad Attitude toward the Pastoral," underscores the Black geographic insights derived from his careful, inquisitive, and lyrical verse. Her chapter describes how Giscombe moves readers through and between the material and emotional registers of the U.S. urban North and rural South (2023, 72-73). Meditating on the "when and where" of safety for Black people, Giscombe's work is at times intentionally puzzling, confronting readers with the speaker's perplexing journey along the boundaries of "past, present, and future; [the] self and pastoral" (87). For Elliot, this intersection of poetics and geography is an experiment in imagination, calling the reader to travel along with the poet as they traverse an emergent racial landscape (88). This creative geographic practice is not only the task of the poet, artist, or activist, but also of the well-meaning scholar wishing to engage with abolitionist worldviews (74; 89). Looking beyond the death-dealing practices of white supremacy, Black Geographies highlight creative strategies of resistance, refusal, and liberation.

In "Part Two: Resistances," anthology contributors explore Black engagement with refusal of state-sanctioned violence through strategic, embodied, and intellectual practices. Ampson Hagan's chapter, "Blackness Out of Place and In Between in the Sahara," studies how racial surveillance marks African immigrants in Niger as the Other through subtle details such as countenance, dialect, and clothing style, demarcating the space *in between* freedom and captivity (2023, 100-101). Here, Black migrants engage in a form of dark sousveillance, or "Black countergeography" that allows them to maneuver around both state apparatuses

attempting to capture and deport them, and humanitarian agencies claiming to offer them aid (Brown 2015; Hagan 2023, 105). In this dance, migrants find a refuge, or a loophole of retreat, from the "otherwise out-of-placeness" experienced through policing (105). While countergeographic loopholes may grant momentary respite from the gaze of constant surveillance, the lives of Black migrant communities remain fugitive; the *in-between* appears to be a dance where "there is no rest" (118). However, Hagan contends that among the "precarious and unsettled" encounters with Blackness there is meaning to be found in countergeographic movement (118). Examining Black life as movement, or dance, can illuminate alternative geographies rooted in resistance, and renegotiate space by nimbly navigating state and social atmospheres that aim to alienate us even among our kin.

Diana Negrín's chapter, "Words Re(En)Visioned: Black and Indigenous Languages for Autonomy," explores Black and Indigenous languages and forms of orality as sources of knowledge for decolonial and autonomous praxis. Negrín suggests that "the opacity that exists within linguistic and oral praxis provides space for autonomy while becoming an emergent cultural and political project at once" (2023, 129). The opacity of linguistic and oral forms interrupts the colonial desire to know and contain, thereby allowing autonomy to emerge. Placing Black and Indigenous geographies and geographic thinking in relation to one another, Negrín points to geographic spaces like *neplanta* (Anzaldua 1987) and the shoal (King 2019) that "invoke an in-betweenness and a state of ongoing formation" where otherwise worlds are possible (Negrín 2023, 132).

Negrín, Elliot, and Hagan show that within Black geographic thought, space and place are relational rather than fixed within clear geographic boundaries; they highlight movement, in-betweenness, and heterogeneity within geographic ideas to gesture toward spaces of freedom while holding the nuances of our lives that cannot be measured. These contributors bridge the material and the poetic in varied ways and share an attentiveness to precision and opacity, demonstrating that the answer to the question of where or "where we know from" is not always a fixed point in space but can be here and there; is always within a temporality and can shift with time; can be simultaneously material and poetic; and is tied to ways of being, thinking, and speaking.

Jordanna Matlon's chapter, "Blackness in the (Post)Colonial African City," directs readers to a study of two Senegalese cities, where affirmations and contestations of Blackness disrupt imperial narratives to posit alternative "livelihood strategies, mobilities, and meaning--making practices" (2023, 147). With attention to various forms of racialized capitalism, Matlon considers how "men of the Black Atlantic are simultaneously marginalized and venerated" for

their participation in "hustler capitalism" and "embodiments of economic survival outside the social contract" (2023, 160). Their activities are labeled an excess of existence, an extralife; and while capitalism may attempt to dispossess them once more, Senegalese men's articulation of Black urbanism in a cosmopolitan African city presents the *possibility* of a nourished Black body across African Black Geographic spatial imaginaries.

Solange Muñoz's chapter, "Marielle Franco and Black Spatial Imaginaries," examines "the significance of Black women in political positions of power and representation, with a particular focus on Councilwoman Marielle Franco's life, death, and legacy in Brazil" (2023, 168). Muñoz gives care and attention to Franco's "social and spatial significance" and "her intersectionality and positionality as an outspoken activist, a Black woman," a queer person, and a single mother (2023, 168). Muñoz argues for "more transnational approaches" that acknowledge and are more representative of shared histories and futures" of Black diasporic imaginaries (2023, 180).

In "Part Three: Futurity," the authors draw awareness to the spatial dimensions of Black life through the lens of Afrofuturism, grounding their racial queries in urban spaces across California, including Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.[2] As a West Coaster raised in L.A. and currently living in Northern California, shah noor found inspiration in this section's attention to Black Californian imaginaries, pasts, and futures. In her chapter "Rendering Gentrification and Erasing Race: Sustainable Development and the (Re)Visioning of Oakland, California, as a Green City," C.N.E. Corbin examines "how current urban sustainable development agendas are working in concert with historically rooted environmental narratives and practices that remove racialized populations identified as undesirable from the landscape" (2023, 180). Specifically, Corbin studies the visual discourses embedded in the "West Oakland Specific Plan" (WOSP) to show that it replicates racialized patterns of dispossession, displacement, and replacement – the latter of which appears as gentrification in Oakland. She notes a unique angle to gentrification in the WOSP through its proposal of "healthy green neighborhoods" that erase Black residents and position new non-Black residents as the beneficiaries of municipal improvements (2023, 190). The intersection of gentrification, greenwashing, and environmental racism can be seen in Corbin's study of the visual media surrounding WOSP and similar anti-Black development projects.

[2] Afrofuturism is a Black imaginary that has been used as a space to re-member and re-imagine worlds beyond Black suffering, beyond an anti-Black world. It is a term coined by writer Mark Dery in 1994 to describe "a genre that infuses African Diaspora sensibilities into science fiction, fantasy, and magical realism frameworks" (Jennings 2014). Afrofuturism has allowed artists, scholars, and organizers to travel through space-time to draw from pasts to create a more just futures in the present, where radical politics and lifeways "outside of white supremacy, racial capitalism, and heteropatriarchy" can be practiced (Quan 2017).

Matthew Jordan-Miller Kenyatta's research in Los Angeles investigates the role of digital Black geographies in crafting just and liberatory futures. Kenyatta introduces readers to his nascent concept, *Afrotechtonics* – defined as a sustained engagement with "the architectures and technologies of power shaping Afrodiasporic life" – and focuses on digital spacemaking techniques employed by *Afrotech* companies to cultivate a sense of Black joy in a gentrified Los Angeles (2023, 217; 237). He foregrounds Afrofuturism as a way to subvert the perception of Blackness as abjection, asserting that Black joy is both a technology and an "art of living through and creating pleasure and happiness alongside suffering" (2023, 224). The chapter addresses Black economic justice and cultural self-determination as pathways to an Afrofuturist liberation of digital spaces. As havens for Black joy, these leisurely, pleasure-filled communions become oppositional experiments in community building deployed against the hegemonic injustices of urban space that all-too-often disregard the desires and dreams of Afrodiasporic residents (2023, 239). In this way, Kenyatta argues for an *Afrotechtonics* that reclaims technopower as a means to track and visualize joyful sites of Black resilience and leisure, both in the digital commons and city streets.

Lindsey Dillon's chapter, "The San Francisco Blues," demonstrates how Black residents in San Francisco organized to make space for Black life through urban planning and blues music guided by a Black spatial imaginary. Dillon tracks this history of change on the West Coast by invoking the legacy of Clyde Woods' blues epistemology to better understand failed redevelopment initiatives in the Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, California (2023). She argues that the countervision put forth by Bay Area Black activists in the 1960s and 1970s articulated cultural and material hopes of a Black San Francisco future that expanded to other historically Black neighborhoods, such as the Fillmore District and even across the water to West Oakland (2023, 251). However, when urban renewal plans were not in the hands of Black residents, these cultural hubs suffered great losses, such as the 1960s music scene in the Fillmore district (2023, 252). Dillon conjures the work of blues guitarist Lowell Fulson, whose 1980s requiem for San Francisco grieved the loss of Black spaces and the decline in Black residents. In his plea for 'Frisco, Fulson croons to the city to "please make room for me" and us (2023, 257). These communities once formed the fulcrum of the Bay Area's Black geographic struggle for working-class consciousness, blues lifestyles, and the era's preeminent jazz movements.

Despite the completion of renewal projects in the Fillmore and the earnest effort of resident activists, the redevelopment of Hunters Point was never realized. Yet Dillon honors those who

tried to produce a more livable and humane community for Black San Franciscans (2023, 256). In the eleventh chapter of the volume, "Today Like Yesterday, Tomorrow Like Today: Black Geographies in the Breaks of the Fourth Dimension," Anna Livia Brand similarly reflects on Black place-making and spatial imaginaries in New Orleans. Brand's analysis focuses on the fourth dimension, the space-time of Black geographies that puts present, past, and future in conversation in a nonlinear and spatial way where Blackness is presenced rather than erased. Her study shows how Black residents confront the white supremacist imaginary of a future New Orleans without them "by presencing Black life" through reclaiming and building spaces and places where city officials and planners tried to prohibit them and creating development imaginaries of their own (2023, 272-273). In their refusal of state-sponsored erasure, Black residents of Hunters Point and New Orleans are not disappeared into the transparent spaces of geography, but rather, are remembered for their vision of Black futures.

Exit: The Black Spatial Imaginary

Notably, this remarkable anthology concludes, not with a word from the editors, but with Sharita Towne's mixed-media meditation, collage prints, and narrative essay mapping the quotidian geographies of Black artists and activists in her life and scholarship. Her intimate work, which also appears as the book's cover, brings readers into conversation with family memories at a riverside, a backyard barbeque, and a Houston garage, pieced together as "cracked Black geographic maps" (2023, 295-297). We are introduced to the qualities of her family: her father's love of photography, her grandfather's relationship with her mother and music, and her mother's appreciation for parachutes (2023, 316-317). There is a rhythm to the collection of snapshots interspersed with countermaps and archival ephemera of L.A.'s history of policing and activism, including photos, book excerpts, and newspaper clippings, creating a running bibliography of Black life and livingness across multiple spatial imaginaries. Towne's transdisciplinary creative and scholarly exploration presents her family history as a multidimensional expression of Black geographies in lived experience, collective memory, and diasporic space.

Black Geographies has been studied and practiced for years, and it is now becoming a legible field of study and institutionalized through conferences, labs, and texts like this anthology. What is risked with greater legibility and institutionalization is co-optation by liberal and reformist projects that neutralize the disruptive potential of radical social theory and movements and perpetuate a legacy of the oppression that the project claims to overcome. However, we believe an epistemological and methodological commitment to practices of precision and opacity that honor the aliveness and livingness of Black geographies can

protect the field, its interlocutors, and its material commitments from co-optation. Towne's multimedia conclusion to the anthology demonstrates the aliveness and livingness of Black geographic praxis that could resist co-optation.[3]

The Black Geographic includes an entire section on resistance, and throughout our review, we discuss the ways Black Geographies resist the colonial imaginary, anti-Black enclosure, and co-optation. However, we caution against an overidentification of Black Geographies with resistance. What might open up if we delink the study of Black Geographies from the study of resistance? For those who are tired and need rest, what would it mean to loosen the study of Black Geographies from the study of resistance? Purifoy via Du Bois poses the important question, "*Where* can dark babies rest?" (2023, 31; original emphasis). What if forging loopholes of retreat meant cultivating material spaces of rest? Future Black geographic work can build upon the work in this anthology by studying spaces and places of Black rest and dreaming. For example, shah noor has facilitated workshops and writing spaces that explore the connection between place-making, Afrofuturism, dreamwork, and the role of imaginative crafting in abolitionist Black geographies. shah noor has also served as the managing editor for a special issue of *The Arrow Journal*, "Undisciplined Archives: Dreaming Across Black Geographies," alongside guest editor Dr. Naya Jones. The special issue defines Black dream geographies as "the study and experience of Black dreaming in space, place, and time, all of which are deeply shaped by long legacies of oppression, resistance, and thriving" (Jones 2023). By connecting Black dreaming directly to the murder of Breonna Taylor in 2020, the issue and essays therein craft an afrofuturist abolitionist vision grounded in the freedoms of dreamwork, rest, and spiritual practice. Ki'Amber's work with the Charles Roundtree Bloom Project has largely been cultivating spaces of rest, connection, and nurturing the imaginations of youth impacted by the incarceration system through spending time outdoors and critical education.[4] Ki'Amber used Afrofuturist and abolitionist theory and praxis to facilitate the Bloom Project's 2023 youth winter retreat, where the theme was dreaming. The retreat facilitated restoration through play, creativity, and connection, and dreaming of alternative worlds through poetry in direct conversation with the violence and genocides in Palestine, the Congo, Sudan, and the United States.

[3] We draw from Kevin Quashie's conception of Black aliveness. Quashie defines Black aliveness as "the becoming of beingness, the sensations that inhabit one's body in its existence and that constitute intelligence, the way that 'bodies think as they feel' (Massumi 211). This recourse to feeling situates aliveness as a plenitude that compounds without pattern, aliveness as a poetic, an affective aesthetic beholding of being, an ars vitalia as in an instance—or series of instances—of being alive" (2021, 19).

[4] The Charles Roundtree Bloom Project is an outdoor healing justice program for youth and families impacted by criminalization, policing, and incarceration in San Antonio, Texas. The goal of the project is to facilitate space of communal healing through reconnecting with the land and place-based socio-environmental education. Ki'Amber Thompson founded the organization in 2019, naming it in honor of her younger cousin who was shot and killed by San Antonio police.

This anthology highlights the significance of imagination and a Black spatial imaginary. Imagination, and specifically, a Black spatial imaginary, is important to Black Geographies because Black people are daily confronted with anti-Blackness and live in the afterlives of slavery and ruins of premature death. Therefore, we use the imaginary not only as resistance to white supremacist spatial imaginaries but as insistence – our commitment to building lives on our own terms and creating spaces where we can breathe, live, and rest. This anthology work shows the Black spatial imaginary's capacity to present Black life against, within, and beyond the anti-Black spatial enclosures and anti-Black world-building projects of the past, present, and future. Ultimately, the anthology reminds us that Black geographic thought is a poetic practice, an epistemology, and an ontology. That is to say, it is a way of worldmaking, a way of knowing, and a way of being that imagines and archives Black life beyond the end of times.

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