

James Baldwin Review
American Literature Association 2027
Calls for Papers

CFP 1:

Baldwin's Late Style

In "Thoughts on Late Style," Edward Said describes how an artist's late works

cannot be reconciled or resolved, since their irresolution and fragmentariness are constitutive, neither ornamental nor symbolic of something else. The late works are about 'lost totality', and it is in this sense that they are catastrophic.

The late works of James Baldwin have often been dismissed as evidence of their maker's exhaustion after years of activism, as a failure to synthesize his fiction and nonfiction, the novels too political, the essays too aesthetic. Yet this supposedly weak synthesis rhymes with Said's meditations on the irresolution typical of an artist's late works.

We lack a comprehensive theory of the late Baldwin. Toward this end, we invite papers that engage with Baldwin's later novels, *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *Just Above My Head*, or late essays like *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, "The Price of the Ticket," or "Every Good-bye Ain't Gone." What form do these works take? How do we describe the late Baldwin style?

For the American Literature Association Convention in Boston in 2027, *James Baldwin Review* invites proposals for 15-minute papers in a panel on Baldwin's late works. Please send your paper title, a brief abstract, and author bio to jbr@wustl.edu by December 30, 2026.

CFP 2:

Baldwin's Broken Speech

Fred Moten has described how in black performance "speech is broken and expanded by writing." A common narrative about the life of James Baldwin works in reverse, so that one finds his writing broken and expanded by speech that becomes increasingly public as he accepts the political responsibilities of fame.

It is just this fame, in moving images of the speaking Baldwin, that frames the usual encounter with Baldwin today. The speeches and interviews themselves, however, have received relatively little scholarly attention. This panel will turn its attention to this aspect of Baldwin's performance, its moment of history, and its reappearance in our own.

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