August Wilson's Mortal Coil

The August Wilson Author Society invites proposals from scholars and creatives at all career stages for a panel at the American Literature Association Conference in Boston May 26-29, 2027. Our theme for the session is mortality:

- How do children of all ages in the plays cope with the death of a parent, and how do parents cope with the loss of children?
- How is death a gendered experience? Are women and men affected differently?
- Audre Lorde gave us the poetic phrase "our dead behind us." How do the dead, consciously or unconsciously, participate in the present and guide the living? When are the dead nurturing and when are they hostile?
- Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* is catalyzed by a life-insurance check. When does death become a material concern in Wilson's plays? What does it contribute economically to surviving characters, and what does it cost them?
- What role did death play in Wilson's own legacy? What price did he pay in terms of unrealized work or literary prizes such as the Nobel?

All proposals that shed light on August Wilson's work are welcomed, regardless of their relevance to these themes. Developmental inquiries from scholars new to Wilson's work are also warmly encouraged. Send your abstracts (~300 words) or queries to J. Ken Stuckey at kstuckey@bentley.edu by **December 15, 2026**. Remember to include your presentation title, your full name as it should appear in the conference program, and your institutional affiliation. If I do not acknowledge receipt within 48 hours, it may be a spam issue, so re-send or reach out on LinkedIn. Final in-person presentations will need to be approximately 15 minutes long, and the conference fee will be $200 dollars (reduced rates available). For more, please see the conference website.

https://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/