
(Re)Animating Black-Native Life in M. Carmen Lane's *Calling Out After Slaughter*

Morgan L. Ridgway | Harvard University

<https://doi.org/10.71106/RDRR2005>

Abstract | Part of how the settler state replicates its power is through managing the conditions and possibilities for life—past, present, and future. The body is a critical part of this biosocial power, and the possibilities for the Black-Native body reveals how settler colonialism materially and discursively orders life. Through M. Carmen Lane's *Calling Out After Slaughter* I argue the settler state assigns Black-Native life a non-living status and I consider how an Indigenous poetics reinvigorates Black-Native life through a critical practice of mourning, love, and care. I argue that Lane mobilizes an Indigenous poetics to generate a liberatory future for Black-Native people in the aftermath of settler colonial terror. Of particular focus are the ways M. Carmen Lane generates a poetics that resists the colonial ordering of the past and present. In excavating the aspects of Black-Native life that have been buried, disfigured, or misremembered, *Calling Out After Slaughter* becomes a textual space that makes material Black-Native people. Lane's development of an Indigenous poetics becomes a method of refusal of the settler colonial state that continues to deny or diminish Black-Native life. In the process, *Calling Out After Slaughter* makes another world more available to our imaginations through the witnessing, reflection, and healing of the past, making way for the reassembly of Black-Native life.

Keywords | Settler Colonialism, Textual Dismemberment, Material Destruction, Decoloniality, Black-Native Life, Mourning, Indigenous Poetics, Embodiment, Remembering, Biosociality, *Calling Out After Slaughter*, M. Carmen Lane

The question of living for the Native person is perhaps always under siege. Billy-Ray Belcourt has described such living as the conditions of misery that shape the biosocial contours of Native lives and bodies. He writes from the orientation of the reserve, saying, “the feeling of indigeneity is the miserable feeling of not properly being of this world” (2). This impropriety of indigeneity comes with the reality that the colonial state, structured and replicated through threats and the exercise of violence, works to materially destroy Native life. Such destruction may come in the form of higher rates of illness, missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirits,¹ and/or the mental turmoil created through immense and often unrelenting loneliness, anxiety, and fear engendered by state surveillance, control, and extortion.²

The stakes of living are indeed high and yet as Karyn Recollet implores, “we need to make sure that we are all alive so that we can make it to the water” (Recollet and Koonsmo 241). To not be disappeared by a world that wants you dead; to “make it to the water,” as Recollet and Koonsmo suggest, is an arduous task.³ The strategies of survival under such conditions are shaped by fear, terror, and the material conditions that threaten Native life and thus practices of making it to the water are neither abstract nor inconsequential. The water, for me here, signals a future world where Indigenous peoples are able to be in and with their bodies. This is to search for ways Indigenous peoples refuse the alienation of themselves engendered by colonial violence that discursively, materially, and socially severs Indigeneity from the present. To reach the water is to reclaim embodiments and relationships stolen or threatened by colonialism and resolutely move toward the future. I’m interested here in how writing, and in particular, an Indigenous poetics for Black-Native life, is part of these practices of getting to the water by making the bodies of Native people material on the page and thus the world.

¹Coined in 1990 in direct opposition to the use of the historical-anthropological term “berdache,” Two-spirits refers to the pan-Indigenous umbrella term used to describe varied gender expressions and sexualities. Its usage is not universal or a direct substitution for western terms like “queer” but it has gained considerable traction in contemporary Indigenous communities to reflect a range of gender and sexual diversity, as well as the particular cultural, sociopolitical, and spiritual roles non-cisgender or non-heterosexual people historically and contemporarily have within tribal nations.

²See, Dyke, Cornelius M., and Donald K. Warne. *American Indian Health Disparities in the 21st Century*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021; Weaver, Hilary N. *Trauma and Resilience in the Lives of Contemporary Native Americans: Reclaiming Our Balance, Restoring Our Wellbeing*. Taylor & Francis, 2025; Dawson, Myrna, and Saide Mobayed Vega. *The Routledge International Handbook on Femicide and Feminicide*. Taylor & Francis, 2023.

³The “water” here evokes the political mobilizing through the phrase “water is life” that understands water as a literal resource and lifeway. Making it to the water is to proclaim the necessity of harm reduction in Indigenous communities that makes the future more available. Water here is a teacher and a healer which offers space for Indigenous communities to practice their relationships with one another and the land.

Black-Native life is terrorized because of the wanton destructive capabilities of the settler state. The settler state is a violent arbiter that, through practices of “documentary genocide,” makes it all but impossible for Black-Native life to have a history (O’Brien vi). The effect of this textual dismemberment not only disrupts and distorts kinship networks, it engenders a hyper-fixation on the body, its aesthetics, its compartments, and its performance. Text, its presence or absence, has material consequences and the power to shape life. The severing of Indigenous life from documents is not only narratively dishonest but it places increased pressures on Indigenous people in the present to perform, present, or otherwise confirm, physically and aesthetically, the narrow colonial knowledge of who Indigenous people are allowed to be. Language, records, and narrative thus remain battlegrounds for freedom in the world and in the body. M. Carmen Lane’s *Calling Out After Slaughter* exists in this ongoing aftermath of textual, bodily, and psychic devastation. Lane confronts the violence of the settler colonial state that works tirelessly to disappear and dismember Native and Black peoples from and in the world. A two:spirit African-American and Haudenosaunee (Mohawk/Tuscarora) artist, Lane’s debut poetry collection brings to the fore the visceral and the embodied to develop a language of refusal that turns away from settler colonial temporal order that generates a non-existence for Black-Native life.

Black-Native life is vacated from the past through disenrollment, through aesthetic narratives, and a racial logic that distorts ancestry in order to perpetuate the settler colonial power to determine Indianness. Chattel slavery and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples created the atmosphere for a burgeoning nation that would become the United States. The afterlife of this genocidal campaign restructured at a social, cultural, economic, legal, and biological level the bodies, minds, intimacies, and communities of Black and Indigenous people across this continent.⁴ In a nation carnivorously expanding the scope of its territory through forced removal and organized by the structural theft of labor of African and African-descended people, Black-Native life was existentially threatening.

In part this is because Black-Native life is evidence of the failure of the completion of the genocidal campaign that sought to eliminate the humanity of Black and Indigenous people. Given the constant assault on Indigenous sovereignty through tropes of the Vanishing Indian, Blackness is used by the colonial state as evidence of the diminishing “purity” of Indigenous people. Black-Native people are targeted then through both disenrollment and socio-cultural distancing that separates Black-Native people from Indianness and normalizes anti-Blackness (see, Klopotek; Mays). Many tribal nations are pressured into aligning with this form of racial discrimination and anti-Blackness as political and cultural practice due to the constant threat of disillusion by the colonial state. The political bind tribal nations are placed in is that sovereignty in the eyes of the colonial state, like whiteness, is intertwined with the denial and/or destruction of

⁴See, Belcourt, Billy-Ray. “Meditations on Reserve Life, Biosociality, and the Taste of Non-Sovereignty.” *Settler Colonial Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan. 2018, pp. 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2017.1279830>; Barker, Joanne. *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity*. Duke UP, 2011; Goldstein, Alyosha, editor. *Formations of United States Colonialism*. Duke UP, 2014; Sexton, Jared. “The *Vel* of Slavery: Tracking the Figure of the Unsovereign.” *Critical Sociology (Sage Publications, Ltd.)*, vol. 42, no. 4/5, Jul. 2016, pp. 583–97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514552535>; King, Tiffany Lethabo. *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*. Duke UP Books, 2019.

Blackness. The treatment of Black-Native people reflects then a deeper and foundational heuristic of settler colonialism that assigns Blackness as labor and Indigeneity as always on the precipice of disappearance.

That Black-Native life continues, however, is also evidence that Indigenous peoples have continued to defy the colonial state by articulating their own metrics for community which itself is an act of sovereignty irrespective of the desires of the American nation-state. Black-Native life, as a form of resistance and refusal is of particular concern here. This investigation into the workings of Indigenous poetics through M. Carmen Lane's *Calling Out After Slaughter* documents how language continues to resist colonial demands that Black-Native life be either nonexistent or fodder for Indigenous survival.

Lane pushes back against the layered disappearances of Black-Native life in contrast to a settler colonial system that Brian Klopotek has described as, "in the context of white supremacy, asserting an Indian identity depended not only on a lack of African ancestry but also on demonstrating antipathy toward people of African ancestry" (219). Central to this is a reclamation of the body and Lane demands the reader witness how an Indigenous poetics—language grounded in the artistic, cultural, and political expression of Indigenous people—can re-animate Black-Native bodies and serve as an inventive foundation for Black-Native futures. This is to further place Lane in a long tradition of Indigenous writers who, as Robert Dale Parker asserts, "shape imaginative language through the routines of human imagination and fallibility, routines that the exoticizing mythologies of mainstream Euro-American culture try to fence off from Indigenous cultures" (134). An Indigenous poetics through imaginative language holds potential to bring Indigenous peoples out of mythology and into reality. Lane's *Calling Out After Slaughter* develops an Indigenous poetics that centers the body, figurative and literal dismemberment, and loneliness that (re)animates Black-Native life in the past and present. Lane's Indigenous poetics make possible a critical practice of mourning that allows for a different type of care for the Black-Native body in both death and dispossession. If settler colonial power functions also in the aftermath of death through the material and textual ordering of bodies, Lane invents an alternative textual world that refuses the nothingness assigned to Black-Native life. Here, I pay particular attention to Lane's poems, dedicated to individuals who the state deems no longer Indigenous. Neither elegy nor aubade in a strict formal sense, Lane dedicates poems to people, places, and ideas as a reflection of the melancholy of loss as well as the insistence of Black-Native life after devastation. Lane's dedication poems operate in two registers. The first is as a reflection of the intimacy between poet and dedicatee that record ongoing relationships with the dead, lost, and loved. Second, they are foundational to the textual animation present throughout *Calling Out After Slaughter* that rescues the Black-Native body from the disfigurements by the settler state.

The severing of Black-Native life at both the individual and the familial level through the denial of Indigeneity through politics of blood quantum, misidentification in death, or discourses of authenticity that may disconnect Black-Native people from community are linked in Lane's poetry.⁵ I argue that these two settler colonial narratives

⁵Racialization through blood is a foundational principle to the workings of Euro-American colonial power in what would become the United States. For Blackness and Indigeneity in particular, the fixation on

mark Black-Native body as either a corpse or as non-existent but never alive in the present. In naming a world after slaughter, Lane refuses this material and temporal cleaving of Black-Native life and generates an Indigenous poetics of mourning that also functions as a hopeful practice of restitution. Such an Indigenous poetics, for Black-Native people, is a critical resource for combating the ongoing colonial conditions of devastation. In foregrounding care, ancestral knowledge, adaptation, and creativity as components of grieving the continued loss of Black-Native life, Lane unsettles the foundations of the existential nature of Black-Native life induced by a violent settler colonial state. Indigenous poetics for Black-Native life is a remedy that refuses a future destined for devastation and instead charts a different path forward.

Given the entanglements of enrollment, race, and settler colonialism, the Black-Native body must confront, particularly in death, the material and discursive severance of Blackness and Indigeneity. Death as a narrative battleground is the central focus of Lane's "Body Parts." This poem, for Esterline Robinson, confronts the terrors of memory as a Black-Native woman has been "hunted & / dismembered // placed in / glass case / overhanging lights / your / descendants / take in / what is left / you / unrecognizable" (132). A feature of Lane's work across *Calling Out After Slaughter*, "Body Parts" builds a practice of mourning that reflects a long history of containment and display of Indigenous peoples (see, Bruchac; Finley; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett; Lonetree).⁶ The subject, her body unrecognizable to her own kin, is an amalgamation of parts that have been collected by the bounty hunter of colonialism. The Black-Native woman's body here is an object for display and consumption.

With the "overhanging lights" that are reflective of both museum displays and interrogation rooms, this Black-Native woman is severed from kinship networks and her body has been reduced to parts. Indeed, Lane continues, "her story / obliterated by / genocide & by slavery // together," which identifies intersecting conditions of violence and terror that structure Black-Native life (135). Genocide and slavery, which as Patrick Wolfe has argued produce two particular orientations for Black and Native peoples and bodies, are in fact collapsed into a single body. Wolfe outlines how "in the case of settler colonies [...] the colonizers come to stay, expropriating the native owners of the soil, which they typically develop by means of a subordinated labor force (slaves, indentureds, convicts) whom they import from elsewhere" (868). Lane challenges any notion that these processes are always bifurcated or that the terror that they inflict on the body is not felt across, between, or within individuals. Black-Native life is at the nexus point of a genocidal campaign to assert white settler futurity and a dehumanizing labor system that transformed Black life into not-human. The Black-Native body in death then becomes a

miscegenation and the idea of racial purity or impurity through blood is violent colonial apparatus that attempts to undo Indigenous sovereignty through the assertion of a vanishing people and dehumanizes Black people as engines of labor. Blood as a two-pronged tool of settler colonial power developed the one-drop rule that assured the continuation of enslavement and later a racial caste system of segregation, and blood quantum laws that define Indigenous people in fractions sought to limit tribal nations' ability to enroll citizens and thus limit the size of their nations. These work in conjunction to expand empire in terms of land and extorts people's bodies as less-than-human labor. Black-Native people are thus in the crosshairs, materially and discursively, of the colonial state's reproduction of such power.

⁶This practice of displaying Indigenous people became a particular fixation in the twentieth century United States which saw both the rapid expansion of academic disciplines such as anthropology and large-scale world's fairs in cities like Chicago and St. Louis.

signifier of the entanglement of white supremacy and settler colonialism that masquerades as modernity (see, Sexton; O'Brien).

"Body Parts" reflects on these multiple registers of settler colonial violence through memory work that attempts to excavate Indigenous histories that have been denied or ignored. Lane calls our attention to how the textual devastation that marks Black-Native life is not simply a lack or refusal to document but the active removal of Black-Native life from its kinship networks. The subject of the poem is described as "she who / has had her / name changed / race shifted / body / given away & / abandoned" (134). The active nature of this violence is not happenstance. As Jean O'Brien has described, the discursive violence of settler colonialism works to allow settlers to define themselves as cultural and political authorities by defining Indigenous people out of existence (O'Brien). The body here, which has already been dismembered and set up for display, becomes beholden to settler colonial narratives that determine who she is and how we should come to know her. We are left with literal fragments of a body and a life that the settler state chooses how we reassemble. Her body is abandoned not by her kin but as part of a concerted effort by the settler state to determine how the dead are incorporated into the state's self-concept. In death, the Black-Native body becomes a proxy for the settler state to assert its discursive authority and determine who we mourn and how.

This discursive power makes possible material destruction as the settler state is then able to determine how we name death or if we name it death at all. As her name is changed, "her Indian / erased / by the black / undertaker," Lane intervenes by literally remembering Esterline Robinson (134). Her name and her body are made unrecognizable and her life and body as an Indian woman is made an impossibility. An Indigenous poetics here functions as a practice of reanimation on the page and a different manner of encountering the dead is made possible. Lane's poetic intervention here signals how the body is a critical battleground wherein settler colonial power is contested. The Blackness of the undertaker suggests that settler colonialism encourages everyone on stolen land to participate in the disfiguring of Native life. This is not to locate Blackness in the same position of power as whiteness in the settler state, but rather to call attention to how the unity of Blackness and Indigeneity in a single body disrupts the racial framework that sustains the discursive and material power of the settler state.

This memory and member-ing work are in service of healing, at an intergenerational level, time that has been distorted in service of the continued elimination of Black-Native life as *both* Black and Indigenous. The Black-Native woman who is denied the documentation of her Indigeneity in the past is used by the state in the present to sever the speaker from their own Indigeneity. Lane articulates this work as a physical process, saying "I am picking up body parts— / I am healing this w/whole" (135). The titular body parts move in multiple registers here as "parts" comes to mean the deceased body fragmented by the settler state and the fracturing of time which denies Black-Native people from having an ancestry, thus demanding the Black-Native body remain unmoored from present time and place. The "w/whole" further announces the ways such memory work is always an encounter with fragmentation, through the dual meaning generated through the slash. Lane articulates Black-Native life as an absence that must reckon with the expulsion of members of one's family who are denied lineage, creating

a hole in one's family line. Simultaneously, Lane describes the stakes of an Indigenous poetics to rectify such traumas and devastation, whereby the textual space of the poem makes possible a process of healing that makes the present whole again.

Lane expands on this refusal of dismemberment of Black-Native life in the poem "Missing Women." If "Body Parts" centers the impact at a familial level of colonial violence, "Missing Women" reveals the structural conditions of that violence. The speaker is a witness to the layers of interconnected violence that are the ground of this nation, saying,

not just
missing
but
murdered

forgotten

women
red & black

trans
copper skinned
blue black women

trafficked &
beaten
undocumented

dismissed &
buried

dismembered

in our nation's
shallowest
of graves. (102–103)

Settler colonialism, as an engine of violence, reproduces its power through the continued assault on Native and Black women both as evidence of the omnipresence of colonial power and as practice for the violent apparatuses that the state develops to wield power against everyone. Disappearance, murder, trafficking, and erasure are just some of the tools the state uses to subjugate anyone marked as threatening to colonial hegemony. That women's bodies become sites of this violence is not happenstance or isolated. Here Lane lays bare the web of connected violence that "red & black // trans / copper skinned / blue black women" must confront and that we all must recognize and grieve. Blackness and Indigeneity remain in the crosshairs of settler colonial violence precisely because the assaults against Black, Native, and Black-Native life are foundational to the infrastructure of the United States. The nation, for Lane here, is a graveyard, filled with reminders and

remainders of violence just under the surface. In linking the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people (#MMIWG2S) movement to the theft of Black women and trans women, Lane refuses the severing of Black-Native life not only because of its material reality but because the violence against Black and Native life is intrinsically linked.

Moving between the scale of family and nation, Lane's work across "Body Parts" and "Missing Women" deploys the language of witnessing as a mode of reckoning with loss. The erasure of Black-Native life in death is part and parcel of the systems that continue to steal Indigenous women, Black women, and trans women. Lane's Indigenous poetics narrates these connections to remember the dead, missing, and misremembered. The graves, literal, discursive, and metaphorical that hold Black, Indigenous, and Black-Native life are indeed "shallow" and an Indigenous poetics offers a language full of Black-Native life brought up out the earth and into the future. The texture of Indigenous life and death is not rectified for the settler state, but rather, Lane turns attention to the processes of state violence that sever Black-Native life from time and space.

The inability to imagine the Black-Native body places Black-Native life outside the discursive boundaries that the settler colonial state uses to continue its assault on Black and Indigenous peoples. Black-Native life becomes a misnamed or unmarked corpse reduced to body parts in perpetual limbo. Lane's poetic intervention here then takes that same textual space and maps an escape route for Black-Native life out of these violent conditions that demand Black-Native people only encounter their bodies and families in pieces. Lane offers an Indigenous poetics as a material and embodied mourning practice that, in reassembling the misremembered and stolen, creates a pathway for Black-Native futures in spite of the narrative violence of the state. By reanimating Black-Native life through excavating the "shallowest / of graves" Lane not only unearths the histories of violence and femicide particular to Black and Indigenous people but uses the poem to honor those who have been stolen away. Even as the colonial state denies the realities of its own violence, Lane deploys poetry as an act of resistance and testimony.

Black-Native people do not only exist in death, as made evident by both the speaker of Lane's poems and Lane themselves. This refusal to become extinct continues to threaten settler colonial hegemony and the state adopts additional strategies to assault Black-Native life. Scott Morgensen describes the machinations of settler coloniality as such, writing, "settler colonialism is naturalized whenever conquest or displacement of Native peoples is ignored or appears necessary or complete, and whenever subjects are defined by settler desires to possess Native land, history, or culture" (16). This possessive function of settler colonialism not only generates subjecthood for all under colonial rule but induces an existential dissonance in Indigenous people. Lane's "Indigenous Black Boy" helps elucidate some of these ideas regarding disfiguration of Black-Native life in death and the dissonance of life in the present. The Indigenous Black Boy in this present is for "your entertainment/ your labor / your target practice / your sexual need // his power / understood / by the powers / that be & / their minions" (47). The "you" and the "powers / that be" here highlight new functions of the settler state to disfigure the Black-Native life, only possible in service of colonial desires. While I previously described such ability as a kind of corpsification of the body that dismembers Black-Native life as a means to

police racial boundaries, here Lane draws attention to objectification as another mode of settler colonial power. While the Black-Native woman's body is removed from her ancestral kin, the Black-Native boy becomes an object to be consumed. The settler state here reduces the Black-Native boy to his body and its functions as material goods in service of maintaining settler colonial power.

Lane refuses this dissolution of humanity through an Indigenous poetics that recognizes Black-Native life that "asks to be / nourished / with anybody's / love" (44). Nourishment here is both a signal of a physical need of the body and an emotional and psychic subsistence. Love is not a metaphor but an insistent demand for Black-Native people to be in relation with their kin as a mode of surviving the terrors of the settler colonial present. Lane continues, writing how the Indigenous Black Boy "wants to be / touched // yells out / for comfort / fights to / achieve / intimacy" (45). This resolute desire for intimacy is in direct opposition to settler colonial powers that cleave personhood from the Black-Native body. Comfort and intimacy, as echoed in the ancestral healing work of "Body Parts," is a longing to materialize Black-Native life in the Black-Native body. Love here is a resource that heals the fragmentation of settler colonialism and is a practice of homemaking in the body that is marked by loneliness and dissociation. Erica Violet Lee writes, that "when we make a home in lands and bodies considered wastelands, we attest that these places are worthy of healing and that we are worthy of life beyond survival" (Lee). This living past survival is made possible through an Indigenous poetics that transforms what is unimaginable for Black-Native life.

The Black-Native body, the Indigenous Black boy, finds a new mode of living through reinvention. "Indigenous / Black Boy // wears his / store bought / regalia // bright hats / big shirts / dark backpacks / to hold the / medicines" (45–46). The persistence of the Indigenous Black Boy is marked through the continued adaptation to life that exiles him from Indigeneity through discourses of authenticity. "Store bought" carries with it the shadow of hand-made, "dark backpacks," the shadow of "real" medicine bags, and Lane uses this contrast to disrupt the narrative about authenticity as being something not modern (see, Lawrence; Ramirez). Further, the Indigenous Black Boy refuses to be erased. Lane continues "when he / dances / on cracks / on cracks / over potholes / beside / road kill // everyone / pretends / his heart / does not / beat / does not / love / does not / leap for / joy" (46). The poem, then, as a record of his persistence, reanimates Black-Native identity; medicine still heals, his dance still an act of honoring and love for ancestors and community. Here, an Indigenous poetics is an act of animacy whereby Black-Native life returns to the Black-Native body. Lane's language is itself a refusal to perpetuate the disappearance or misunderstanding of Black-Native life. Lane concludes saying "Indigenous Black / Boy // must be uprooted // cuz he will / never / lay down & / die" (48). Lane turns the narrative of authenticity on its head, marking adaptation, migration, and transformation, as key features in the continued survival of Black-Native life.

In the wake of such violence that denies the "Indigenous Black Boy" life as Indigenous, Lane continues to build a poetics that offers another path forward. In "Clan/Destine" Lane continues this challenge to the presumed illicitness of Black-Native life embodied by the "Indigenous Black Boy." The title itself severing "clandestine" into

two new words, clan and destine, brings forth both familial and communal intimacies and evokes the future tense of an ordained decree. Lane writes:

hidden beneath
my black rage
is our
red road

I am
bone & ash
mixed with cement
stories I need
to hear
buried

often denied

built upon by
steel beams
bricks & glass

one drop continent
unknown quantum
of Turtle Island

imported stone

this dark blood
stuff by bleached
cotton with string
clots & congeals

there is no room
for this thick mass
at any drum. (53–54)

Red hidden beneath Black, Lane positions Black-Native life not only as mixture but as a composite of stories of survival that have been denied in the present. Lane's insistence that Indianness is not negated by Blackness or vice versa emerges through the critique of both the American one-drop rule with the political ordering of Indigeneity via blood quantum. Under such colonial logics, Black-Native life is rendered impossible, and denies Black-Native life a place at the drums and in community.⁷ This isolation or exile is precisely what the titular Indigenous Black Boy above confronts. Yet those stories "buried often denied" are not lost and indeed proclaim otherwise. The momentum of the poem propels the reader toward a world where such bifurcation between Black and

⁷For many Indigenous communities drum circles are a heartbeat for culture and community. Gatherings around and with drums are opportunities for interconnectedness, healing, the exchange of knowledge from Knowledge Keepers, and intergenerational connection.

Indigenous identities is denied, instead creating a new future together, saying, “I say / spirit is / a-callin’ // *Yansá* is cracking / concrete / open // this time Grandmother Spider / is spinning fire // creating us / new life” (54–55; italics in original). New life is born through the meeting of Grandmother Spider and *Yansá*, the former a revered protector figure present within multiple Indigenous belief systems and the latter one of the principal female deities within the Yoruba pantheon, that create space for Black-Native life to have a place in community.

That Black-Native life remains despite these discursive and material attempts to isolate or destroy it is deeply inconvenient for settler narratives that deny humanity to Black people and transform Indigenous people into specters. Scholars have noted that haunting, or ghostliness, is a particular heuristic for understanding the precarities of the Native body within the context of ongoing settler colonialism. For example, Colleen Boyd and Coll Thrush write, “Native ghosts have in fact shaped and informed colonizing encounters in significant ways, becoming stock characters in a quotidian North American drama of displacement, transformation, and belonging” (viii). The ghostliness of Indigeneity is used by the settler colonial state to generate meaning for itself and for its subjects. Jodi Byrd, among other scholars, has described this as the ways the figure of the Indian is “a colonial, imperial referent that continues to produce knowledge about the indigenous as ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ otherness” (19). In the context of Black-Native life, this signification of primitiveness and haunting ghostliness is complicated by the hyper-fixation on the labor of Blackness engendered through the ongoing legacies of slavery, which as Stephanie Smallwood asserts, “reduced people to the sum of their biological parts, thereby scaling life down to an arithmetical equation and finding the lowest common denominator” (43). The power to disfigure or dismember is critical for the settler colonial state’s self-concept which devours Black and Indigenous life in tandem to create narratives of white supremacy, racialized labor, and Native pastness. Black-Native life is, for the colonial state, an embodied contradiction, one that must both be fully alive in order to become a resource for capital and a ghost who is evidence of a vanishing people. The experience of Black-Native life, to be repeatedly dismembered and reduced to parts, then reveals the entanglement of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous violence as foundational for settler colonial coherence.

The textual worlds of indigeneity are material precisely because the settler colonial state mobilizes discourse to continue to kill Indigenous peoples. To reanimate the Black-Native body through mourning and love is an act of refusal within the atmosphere of terror that is coloniality. *Calling Out After Slaughter* as a text empowers the anomalous marginalia that is Black-Native life to unearth not simply its traumas but the calls for love that are the foundations for the future. In doing so, Lane turns our focus toward Black-Native life not only as historical and material fact but to remind us of the potentials of Black-Native people to unsettle the workings of colonial power through their anomalous position in the state. Daniel Heath Justice points out that the anomalous body “functions as both a personal and a communal ‘interpretive occasion,’” allowing for a constantly renegotiated and contextualized set of meanings regarding ideas about the body, authenticity, human, and history (221). To see Black-Native life as an anomaly is to draw attention to how the ongoing existence of Black-Native people challenges the racial ordering of coloniality while also creating space to acknowledge and reexamine the reality of contemporary lived experiences of Indigenous peoples. In witnessing and

grieving the history of Black-Native life, *Calling Out After Slaughter* builds the necessary interpretative language to renegotiate the place of Black-Native life as part of the complex and specific histories of Indigenous peoples rather than as a literal or discursively dismembered corpse. Black-Native life emerging “after slaughter” is another record of the incompleteness of the settler colonial mission of dominance and dominion. *Calling Out After Slaughter*, as a textual space, refuses the totality of devastation language can have on Indigenous and Black life, and instead honors the scars and charts a path forward.

In “Thirty-Nine Winters” Lane continues to develop this interpretive language through a focus on gratitude as a practice of recognition that invites a rewriting of the future. Lane writes, “you // who have / been part of / the journey / to now / I offer gratitude & thanksgiving / take it in // you who / have evoked // a widening / of vision / this beginning / starts here” (117). On the page “gratitude” and “& thanksgiving” are separated by a wider space causing the eye to linger in the space of gratitude before continuing. This literal space mobilizes the poetics that Lane develops throughout *Calling Out After Slaughter* that demands the reader witness the past as a path toward a different future. Lane continues, writing, “gratitude / is a mercy // heal that shit / let the scar form // hold on to / nothing // let go of the / story // tell the story / again/ now // this time / reveal the whole / of it” (118). Lane’s offering of gratitude and thanks is in service of a rebuilding of the world. The ‘you’ evoked here is battered with the scars to prove it. But it is the process of scarring that reflects healing and is foundational to this new beginning. Healing demands a reckoning with grief, with the stories that have been hidden or told only partially and fester in the body. Allowing the scars to take shape is a process of releasing the pain and burdens of violent pasts and creates the opportunity to tell the whole of it. This whole, made possible through facing language again, is that critical practice of reassembly that allows for a world after devastation.

Mishuana Goeman asks “how might our own stories become the mechanism in which we can critically (re)map the relationships between Native peoples and communities” (12)? Lane’s work in *Calling Out After Slaughter* suggests that the bodies of Black-Native people, in life and death, are central for such maps toward freedom. Across the collection the insistence of Black-Native life begs the question, how might the records, desires, and languages of Black-Native living become a mechanism through which we reorder relationships between Native and Black communities in defiance of settler coloniality? How might the stories of Black-Native people reorient our understandings of care for each other and ourselves? If an Indigenous poetics is instructional insofar that it narrates a method for a radical reorientation of the world, then *Calling Out After Slaughter* materializes a Black-Native textual and embodied method that is in service of building a world after this one. Such an after-world is apocalyptic, not in a dystopian sense but rather in a generative one. That is, the world must end and there is a time after slaughter.

When we encounter the opacity of Black-Native life, it is due to the foundational structures of the settler colonial state that order life, determines who and how people die, and attempts to monopolize the narratives and memories of Black, Indigenous, and Black-Native people. Regardless of the state’s refusal to speak of Black-Native people, Black-Native life is that anomalous dark matter that impacts the understandings and

workings of coloniality, race, the body, and the human. In reclaiming language as a tool to acknowledge the violent pains of history, Lane gives shape to the unique hauntings of Black-Native life. Billy-Ray Belcourt notes in a conversation with Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Nisha Ramayya that “poetry can be where the fact of our survivability is not under siege and therefore can create a context for shared struggle and solidarity” (Ramayya et al. 56). *Calling Out After Slaughter* is one such record of what might be possible when the survivability of Black and Indigenous life is not under siege and instead reveals the many axes of shared struggle that are needed to refuse the settler colonial state. If an Indigenous poetics makes another world more available to our imaginations, then Lane carves out a still-to-be-determined space for Black-Native living through poetics. In the process, Lane interrupts the corpsification, the isolation, and the denial of Black-Native life that are needed for the settler colonial state to cohere in the present.

The discursive power of colonialism to name who and what a body is remains foundational to the continued atmosphere of violence we all live in. The persistence of Black-Native life then remains an existential threat to settler coloniality and the living, breathing, and loving bodies of Black-Native people remain under threat. This much is certain, Black-Native life signals a new horizon where what we know about Indianness, Blackness, kinship, and the future can be transformed. In some ways *Calling Out After Slaughter* reshapes Native literature by troubling its edges to reveal how poetics can be made useful for Black-Native life; how it might recalibrate to bring in to clearer view Black-Native people as part of Indigenous nations and communities. In understanding and grieving how Black-Native life has been lost, Lane urges us to heal collectively in service of both individual and community wellness. Through this practiced mourning and the repeated turns toward love and care, Lane outlines a world that can reorder our understandings of history and our bodies. The settler colonial state does not have a monopoly on living despite its ever-increasing violent tools of power. *Calling Out After Slaughter* is an imaginative practice of reassembly and in tending to the scars, literal and metaphorical, a horizon of freedom remains in sight.



Works Cited

- Belcourt, Billy-Ray. "Meditations on Reserve Life, Biosociality, and the Taste of Non-Sovereignty." *Settler Colonial Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan. 2018, pp. 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2017.1279830>.
- Boyd, Colleen E., and Coll Thrush, editors. *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History*. U of Nebraska P, 2011.
- Bruchac, Margaret M. *Savage Kin: Indigenous Informants and American Anthropologists*. U of Arizona P, 2018.
- Byrd, Jodi A. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. U of Minnesota P, 2011.
- Finley, Chris. "Violence, Genocide, and Captivity: Exploring Cultural Representations of Sacajawea as a Universal Mother of Conquest." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 35, no. 4, Sep. 2011, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8d33t8x3>.
- Goeman, Mishuana. *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*. U of Minnesota P, 2013.
- Justice, Daniel Heath. "Notes Toward a Theory of Anomaly." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1–2, Jan. 2010, pp. 207–242, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2009-020>.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. U of California P, 1998.
- Klopotek, Brian. *Recognition Odysseys: Indigeneity, Race, and Federal Tribal Recognition Policy in Three Louisiana Indian Communities*. Duke UP Books, 2011.
- Lane, M. Carmen. *Calling Out After Slaughter: Poems*. GTK Press, 2015.
- Lawrence, Bonita. "Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood. U of Nebraska P, 2004.
- Lee, Erica Violet. "In Defence of the Wastelands: A Survival Guide." *GUTS*, no. 7, 30 Nov. 2016, <https://gutsmagazine.ca/wastelands/>.
- Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, The U of North Carolina P, 2012.
- Mays, Kyle T. *City of Disposessions: Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, and the Creation of Modern Detroit*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2022.
- Morgensen, Scott. *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. U of Minnesota P, 2011.
- O'Brien, Jean M. *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*. U Of Minnesota P, 2010.

- Parker, Robert Dale. "The Multiplicity of Early American Indian Poetry." *The Cambridge History of Native American Literature*, edited by Melanie Benson Taylor, Cambridge UP, 2020, pp. 131–148, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108699419.008>.
- Ramayya, Nisha, et al. "'Rehearsal for the World-Building Outside of Colonialism': A Conversation with Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Billy-Ray Belcourt." *Wasafiri*, vol. 37, no. 3, Jul. 2022, pp. 50–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02690055.2022.2067199>.
- Ramirez, Renya K. *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond*. Duke UP Books, 2007.
- Recollet, Karyn, and Erin Marie Konsmo. "Afterword: Meeting the Land(s) Where They Are At: A Conversation Between Erin Marie Konsmo (Métis) and Karyn Recollet (Urban Cree)." *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education*, edited by Linda Tuhiwai Smith et al., Routledge, 2018.
- Sexton, Jared. "The Vel of Slavery: Tracking the Figure of the Unsovereign." *Critical Sociology (Sage Publications, Ltd.)*, vol. 42, no. 4–5, Jul. 2016, pp. 583–597, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514552535>.
- Smallwood, Stephanie E. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*, Harvard UP, 2008.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Land, Labor and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race." *American Historical Review*, vol. 106, no. 3, June 2001, pp. 866–905.