

Book and New Media Reviews

From the Book and New Media Review Editor's Desk

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In Roxane Gay's CCCC 2021 keynote address she praised academic writing that people actually want to read, which she described as writing that "sings." As I viewed Gay's keynote with an eleven-week-old infant on my lap, I was reminded of Katherine May's spirited book *Wintering* because not only is her prose delightful to read but also because she inexplicably loses her speaking voice and slowly works to regain it through taking singing lessons. May also explores the loss of her writing voice following the birth of her son and how a "ball of ideas" would get stuck and refuse to emerge unless she went on long walks (152). Methods to work through blocks to written and vocal production have long preoccupied teachers of both writing and public speaking (Warren 179). Though May offers only provisional answers to the question of why in some seasons of life we find ourselves voiceless and in others full-throated, she does celebrate her voice's return and opines that in learning to sing again with her young son that she teaches herself and him "not just words and lyrics, but how to survive" (228). Becoming a mother in January 2021 occasioned my own metaphorical wintering or period of transition between two worlds. My wintering required preparation ranging from stocking my freezer with meals to preparing myself to give patient hospitality to the new little person who has taken up residence in my home and heart.

Now on the other side of winter, it is my hope that readers of the Spring 2021 issue will assess the reviews from Sherita Roundtree, Catherine Compton-Lilly, Cassie Wright, and Jamie D. I. Duncan as instructive guides to recent manuscripts they read and found illuminating. I further hope readers will appreciate the broad constellation of ideas these four authors explore: from racial trauma, Black freedom, and activist work to birth narratives, body literacy, and practices of reading out loud—there is much to recommend and appreciate herein. There is writing that sings.

Works Cited

- Gay, Roxane. "Keynote with Roxane Gay." Conference on College Composition and Communication Virtual Convention. 9 April 2021. Keynote.
- May, Katherine. *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*. Penguin Random House, 2020.
- Warren, Lee. "Singing and the Art of Writing." *Improving College and University Teaching*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1981, pp. 179–83.