

Acknowledgments

This book bears the traces of myriad returns to people, ideas, and places that have indelibly shifted my life. Instead of “turning away,” bell hooks urges instead for a “return to love.” These revisitations and revisions have been a return to—and a labor of—love. Revisiting a key figure and text in her memoir *Bone Black* (1996)¹ and again in her book *All About Love: New Visions* (2000), bell hooks recalls her girlhood: “Rilke gives meaning to the wilderness of spirit I am living in. His book is a world I enter and find myself. He tells me that everything terrible is really something helpless that wants help from us. I read *Letters to a Young Poet* over and over. I am drowning and it is the raft that takes me safely to the shore.”² These journeys are tender and terrifying. In a world that feels at times like drowning, your words and embodied wisdoms are our raft. May we all regain our shores.

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