

Gratitudes

For the breath of life that animates my journey with and beyond the creature of ink and paper you now read, I am grateful for the ancestors and divinities holding space for me. May this instrument bring many closer to what freedom can be.

I am privileged to work at a public university where many of us believe and practice learning for ourselves, for others, and for the many who can dream and aspire through our work, our teaching, and the gift of accompanying one another and our students. My colleagues in Latino and Caribbean Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies have held space for the visions articulated through this study for more than a decade. I am especially appreciative for the mentorship, friendship, and companionship of Ethel Brooks, Zaire Dinzey-Flores, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Michelle Stephens, Deb Vargas, and Omaris Zamora. Nelson deserves special recognition for supporting my thinking about this study through an appearance and exchange with students in one of his graduate seminars and for sponsoring the workshop on my manuscript with Roberto Strongman and Edgar Rivera-Colón. Thank you to Omaris and Zaire and to all the colleagues in attendance for accompanying me in working through some of the ideas in this book at the Black Latinx Americas Labs before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. This book has enjoyed the companionship and mentorship of many friends connected to Rutgers University throughout the years, including colleagues in the Institute for Research on Women's 2020–21 Seminar, led by Arlene Stein and Sarah Tobias, and the Tepoztlán Institute for the Transnational History of the

Américas' 2021 virtual meeting. Mary Hawkesworth provided invaluable and rigorous feedback on the manuscript as a whole. Emerging scholars who have collaborated with me, listened to me, and redirected me as needed include Camilla Belliard-Quiroga, Alok Vaid-Menon, and Rafael Vizcaino. Yomaira Figueroa-Vásquez mentored me through an important rewrite of the introduction of the book—what a marvel to be mentored by one of your own mentees! Judith Rodriguez has become a dear friend and fierce interlocutor with this text; it is sharper and richer because she has given the most transformative feedback I have ever enjoyed receiving for my work; I only hope I might model for others the kind, loving, and rigorous engagement that Judith has shared with me. Hyacinth Miller has been a companion and interlocutor about and beyond this book; your presence and mentorship have meant the world to me. Madai Poole and Maria Ealey have been steadfast supporters and ingenious collaborators in working through all bureaucratic challenges of our collective institutional life. But perhaps the biggest shout-outs here go to Carlos iro Burgos, who worked with me steadfastly throughout the drafting and revising process and whose own growth and evolution as a scholar activist I have accompanied. This study benefits from his unerring writer's ear, his ability to model steadiness and peace even in the thick of crisis, his gentle and big-hearted sense of humor, and his belief that men of color can hold space for one another to grow into fuller expressions of the men we have been taught to be. Gracias.

I am a devoted unionist, and part of what has made Rutgers a genuine home for me has been the community I have found with fellow hell-raisers. For your presence, companionship, and guidance, I am grateful to Sandra Rocío Castro, Saskia Cipriani, Carlos Fernández, Michelle Shostack, and Silismar Surriel. My union peeps keep me hoping, dreaming, and actively working to realize a better workplace for everyone, and I am grateful for the comradeship of Becky Givan, Patrick Nowlan, BJ Walker, Sherry Wolf, and Todd Wolfson. Donna Murch deserves a special shout-out for her political intuition, as well as her boundless intellectual generosity. And we just have a hell of a lot of fun when we get to hang out. I hope we get to write a book together some day, but my heart swells with pride to know that we are friends.

As the manuscript evolved, it earned some friends and taught me lessons about what honest collegiality is supposed to be. In this regard, I extend my gratitude to Richard Morrison for offering sobering critical editorial feedback at the time I needed it. Salvador Vidal-Ortiz also provided invaluable feedback and the sustained gift of friendship. I am happy to be in the company of Ken Wissoker and the Duke University Press team in bringing this study to the

world, and I am gratified to see this work published in the Writing Matters! series. Particular kudos goes to Erica Rand, whose advocacy for this work included challenging me to see more than I could see on my own. I am also indebted to the external readers for their rigorous engagement with this work, for their belief in its promise, and for their continued challenge for me to push it to be closer to realize its potential. Joshua Gutterman Tranen, Liz Smith, Annie Lubinsky, and Aimee Harrison: thank you for your responsiveness and clear-headed guidance in the production process. Leonard Rosenbaum continues to amaze me with his editorial skill and responsiveness. Thank you for the attention you brought to preparing the text for production and indexing.

I came to think and write this book in and through community and love for the parts of myself I had been taught to hate. I credit and thank Ana-Maurine Lara and Aláí Reyes-Santos for the Transnational Black Feminist Retreat that changed everything for me and (I know) for several others of us who were there. For my introduction into Regla de Ocha, I am indebted to Maritza Barranco Rodríguez and all members of the *Ilé de Abbebe Oshún* in Santo Domingo-Havana. I am also grateful for the spiritual companionship and mentorship of Jaime Gaviria, and I look forward to writing a book together.

Friends and interlocutors of this book include folks I literally met while revising. They took on reading and offering their thoughts on specific sections of the book, and it has grown the richer for it: Luis Menéndez-Antuña, Vinicius Marinho, and Santiago Slabodsky. My love and comradeship with the poet and critic Octavio González grew through helpings of Zoom conversations and the way he brings a generous heart to his incisive engagement with this book and with me. Over the years, my soul has been fed with steady helpings of the extraordinary work of Caroline Bergvall, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Caridad Souza, and Gina Athena Ulysse, and I had the good fortune to getting them to lay eyes on this text and talk with me about it. For stunning and formative readings, I am also grateful to Elizabeth Pérez and Roberto Strongman at a Zoom talk hosted by the Chicano Studies Institute at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Director Inés Casillas deserves special mention for her leadership and invitation. Questions, suggestions, and comments emerging from interaction with all these smart interlocutors were important in how this text evolved. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, and Michelle Stephens are towering figures in their fields, amazing mentors, and priceless colleagues. Their generosity as demanding readers and perspicacious interlocutors has also shaped this text. I am grateful to Yolanda for her mentorship and support throughout the decades we have known each other and for having invited me to visit and present sections of the book before her

colleagues at the University of Miami and to her colleagues for engaging and supporting my work: Jafari S. Allen, Donnette Francis, Gema Perez Sanchez, and George Yúdice. Alan Filreis, my mentor of almost three decades, read and engaged this book with his characteristically relentless intensity, and I credit our emotional and intellectual reencounter for the crystallization of the signature term of this text: *faggotology*. Thank you.

Edgar Rivera-Colón appears more than once in the gratitudes because he has traveled with me and with this text for several of its iterations. I think one of the reasons I got the job at Rutgers almost twenty years ago was so I would meet Edgar. He is at once my toughest critic and most generous intellectual companion, my spiritual adviser and the friend who can put you in your place when that needs to happen. You have believed in this text and in our pastoral mission with the little queens coming up. Ours is work that feeds *la obra*, and I hope that this text, born out of many of our conversations throughout the years, will also become a friend and companion in your ministry.

I have enjoyed companionship and friendship that makes family not something you are but something you practice. My family includes dear mentors such as Stuart Curran, Alan Filreis, and Joseph Wittreich, and friends of a lifetime Shauna Ahern, Aaron Ampie, Ethel Brooks, Yudy Cairo, Erica Edwards, Maceo Edwards, Rosario and Rosita Fernández and clan, Corinne Minard and her daughters Paloma and Ilona García-Minard, Katherine Grau, Marina Grau, the Labour clan (Agueda, Luana, and Diego), Fátima Portorreal Liriano, Pablo Mella, Julissa Reynoso, Robyn Rodriguez, Deb Vargas, Katyuska Vazquez, and my cousins in the Decena clan (Pablo, Carlos Alberto, Dorca Gilbertson, Gloria, Ginette, Gisselle) and the Fernández clan (Rhina Esmeralda, Giselle Oliva, Angela Celeste). Little by little, I enjoy reencountering my blood brothers Edwin and Omar as adults, as well as my viejos Xiomara and Dario.

The only thing greater than coming into this life to do work that opens paths for others is the opportunity to accompany human beings through their journeys, and this is where my home front continually feeds my zeal to imagine a world more capacious, more open, than the one I inherited. It's sometimes shocking for me to take stock of the fact that I am a man who is married to another man and that our love and companionship have made space for the lives of the two young men we are honored to call our sons. I look forward to the day when Jordan Joaquín or Joshua Ulysses will come back from a college class and argue with me about a point made in this book, in an article, or in anything else I get to produce in print. May this offering be as much of a gift to them as it might be for other queerlings in the future so they might teach

me and all of us how they see the horizon for freedom and the full realization of our humanity.

Joaquín Alfredo Labour-Acosta has taught me so much about what it means to mobilize power, resources, and sacrifice in support of others. This book represents a very personal take on what it means to have one's work irradiate, open, and expand the horizon for the ones coming. But the love of humanity that fires up this query comes from the same love that defines our life together, and this is a love he models for himself, for our sons, and for me.