



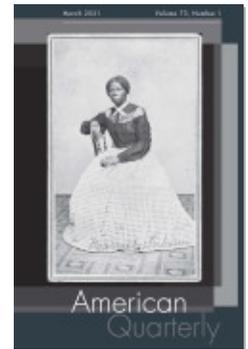
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American Quarterly, Volume 73, Number 1, March 2021, pp. 25-52 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press



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Photography, Darkness, and the Underground Railroad: Dawoud Bey's *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*

Shawn Michelle Smith

On seeing Dawoud Bey's *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* (2017) for the first time, one is struck by all the darkness. Against the white walls of the gallery, the large dark prints that constitute the series resemble a minimalist installation of black rectangular panels (fig. 1). But in looking more closely, spending time and allowing one's vision to adjust to the subdued registers, one realizes that she can see quite a bit. In these shadowy landscapes, the reflective surfaces of water and the shiny leaves of trees, bushes, and undergrowth catch one's eye, as do the bright whites of picket fences and farmhouses (fig. 2). Although some details refuse to come into visibility, looking at the images replicates the experience of peering into the dark; the longer one gazes, the more one can see.



Figure 1. Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago (January 11–April 14, 2019). Photograph by the author.



Figure 2.
Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black: Untitled #1 (Picket Fence and Farmhouse)*, 2017. Gelatin silver print, 44 × 55 in. Copyright Dawoud Bey. Courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago.

of Hudson. The project was commissioned by Front International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, where the images were installed in St. John's Episcopal Church in the summer of 2018 (July 14–September 30). The church was a particularly charged site for the work, as it was known as Station Hope on the Underground Railroad, the final stop for runaways who had made their way to Cleveland and would then cross Lake Erie into freedom in Canada.

I saw *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* as it was displayed at the Art Institute of Chicago in the spring of 2019 (January 11–April 14). There, Bey presented a selection of sixteen of his images in conjunction with forty-two photographs he curated from the museum's collection, displaying the historical images in an anteroom that one had to pass through in order to view Bey's work. As Bey has said of the curated images, his aim was to "visualize black presence

The series of twenty-five large-scale black-and-white photographs imagines stations of the Underground Railroad in Ohio, and Bey made the photographs in Cleveland and the small town



Figure 3. Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago (January 11–April 14, 2019). Photograph by the author.

in the American physical and social landscape.”¹¹ The curated photographs do just that, and they also situate African American life within the frames of photography. The curated images make visible the coterminous histories of photography and the African American freedom struggle, directing viewers to locate Bey’s work within those interlocking cultural and visual trajectories (fig. 3).

The images Bey selected from the Art Institute’s collection represent a wide cross section of the material history of the medium, including a daguerreotype, albumen prints, black-and-white gelatin silver prints, and color chromogenic prints, and they range in date from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first. A variety of genres are included, such as snapshots, documentary photographs, landscapes, formal portraits, and street photographs. Anonymous as well as famous photographers are featured, including Gordon Parks, Danny Lyon, Walker Evans, and Alfred Stieglitz. Some of the images are iconic, such as Lyon’s *John Lewis in Cairo* (1963), the photograph used in the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) poster “Come Let Us Build a

New World Together,"² while others are less familiar, such as Stieglitz's *Hedge and Grasses—Lake George* (1933). Landscapes include Ansel Adams's dramatic black-and-white photograph of the bare white trunks of an aspen grove in winter. Snapshots show African American men, women, and children posing for the camera, finely dressed, smiling back at loved ones, proudly holding up a freshly caught fish, mugging on the tennis court.

Racial injustice and antiblack violence, including slavery and lynching, are also on display in this collection. Carrie Mae Weems's *Black and tanned your whipped wind of change howled low blowing itself-ha-smack into the middle of Ellington's orchestra Billie heard it too and cried strange fruit tears* (1995) reproduces the scarred back of Gordon, a fugitive who joined the Union Army. Slavery is also marked by Samuel J. Miller's daguerreotype portrait of Frederick Douglass, the famous fugitive abolitionist orator and proponent of photography,³ and by the sites of Civil War battles captured by Timothy O'Sullivan and John Reekie, as well as the images of plantation houses made by Walker Evans in 1935. A lynching photograph shows a white man captured in the camera's flash, posing at night by the naked body of an African American man hanging from a tree. Documentary images show African American men and women demonstrating and protesting racial injustice, caught in the arms of white policemen, fallen by the side of the road, wounded and bleeding.

As this photographic framing contextualizes Bey's work in a broader history of photography, it also invites one to consider what the photography of the Underground Railroad looks like in the historical record. Under what conditions did those who traveled its clandestine routes leave photographic traces? How and when did they choose to pass through photography on the way to freedom?⁴ Bey's *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* not only draws out the limits of photography in representing this history; it also reorients the view, asking one to linger in the literal and metaphorical darkness of photography, observing what registers in its recesses, and what remains outside its frames.

Following Bey's lead, this essay situates *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* within a history of photography focused on the African American freedom struggle, and specifically on those episodes to which the work most directly refers, namely, the history of the Underground Railroad.⁵ The visual culture of the Underground Railroad is treacherous terrain, marked by threats of exposure, both literal and photographic, dangers carefully negotiated by those who traveled its routes. Bey's work calls attention to the perilous flights of self-emancipating people, but refuses to bring them explicitly into view, keeping them under the cover of a sheltering darkness. He has produced dark, nearly illegible views of

a historical path doubly obscured, by time as well as by design. In doing so, the artist intervenes in the logics of photographic exposure, both literal and metaphorical, using the technology to conceal as well as reveal. In concert with Bey's impulse, this essay considers the ways in which African Americans have historically negotiated photography, particularly its capacities to signal ownership as well as self-possession during slavery. Those who traveled the Underground Railroad understood how they might harness the power of photography to the cause of freedom, but also how photography might capture them in dangerous exposures.

Night Coming Tenderly, Black is a historical project, but the striking darkness of the prints registers the unavailability of historical evidence and the lack of material markers left latent in the physical landscape. Further, the obscured nature of historical evidence marked in *this* terrain is heightened by the specific subject matter, once again the Underground Railroad, which was hidden with intent. An interconnected network of local groups that assisted runaways in making their way to the North, the Underground Railroad was always a dangerous operation, especially in the Southern states, where the flight from slavery and the assisting of fugitives came with extreme risks. After the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, it also became illegal in the North to assist men and women fleeing for their lives, and many "stationmasters" of the Underground Railroad destroyed their records, making it difficult for later historians to piece together their work.⁶ Today the Underground Railroad is doubly hidden, then, as operatives destroyed the historical records of a network never meant to be overtly visible in the first place, and Bey's dim views are especially appropriate to his subject.

Bey's dark images inventively engage the mechanics and metaphors that shape the medium of photography as well as its material and social history. Indeed, the darkness of Bey's prints intervenes in one of the central mythos about photography, namely, that it is "light writing." Bey's prints are off-scale, tilting far into darkness. In *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*, dark and black are not the ground against which light and white emerge, but the very medium of photography itself. Indeed, Bey draws into view the darkness without which photography cannot exist in the analog forms he prefers. The camera is a dark box that keeps light *out*, except in the measured increments of fractions of a second. The spaces in which analog films and papers are developed are literally "darkrooms." Photography fails completely without darkness, and Bey reorients one's attention to photography's dark side.⁷

To make such dark images, Bey manipulated his negatives by overexposing them in the darkroom. By shining “too much light” through the negatives, he made the prints appropriately dark. “Overexposure” and “underexposure” mark the language and mechanics of photography and light that lay bare a norm, namely, the “correct” amount of exposure, which assumes that a “good” picture can be agreed on. But what is that picture? And what does it represent? What is “too much,” and what is “not enough”?

The photographic record of the Underground Railroad is sparse, by necessity. The visibility and exposure of photographic capture would have put fugitives, and those who helped them—Vigilance Committee members, stationmasters, conductors, family, and friends—at further risk. A photographic record of routes would have made them vulnerable to discovery. Bey’s images register darkness as the sheltering cover for runaways and their allies, and denote the relative absence of photographic traces as protection from surveillance. The dark images suggest that the usual lenses of photography provide an ill-fitting frame for this subject.⁸ Bey’s dark, overexposed prints draw into view the historical and metaphorical as well as the technical limits of photographic representation. They hover on the brink of legibility, highlighting the point at which photography reaches its limits as a visual technology. *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* brings one to the edge of photographic sight.⁹

Scholars have also taken recourse to the language of exposure in thinking about race and representation. As many have argued, in US visual culture black *bodies* have often been “overexposed” and made hypervisible in ways that make black *subjects* “underexposed” and invisible. In the history of photography, what Darby English has called “black representational space” is marked by both spectacle and obfuscation, by too much visibility and not enough.¹⁰

As Bey’s dark prints bear witness to the relative obscurity of the Underground Railroad, they also intervene in the compulsory exposures of slavery. The darkness of Bey’s images refuses the white surveillance of blackness and black bodies instituted in slavery and continuing in its wake, eluding the white oversight practiced on the plantation, as well as the marking and forced illumination of the enslaved.¹¹ In the visual realm of slavery, blackness was brutally put on display for white eyes in the spectacle of torture, the gaze of the overseer, the sexual violence of white masters, and the everyday refusals of all forms of spatial and bodily privacy to enslaved people. In this context, light, visibility, and exposure—all the things on which photography is generally thought to depend—figure capture and captivity.¹²

In the visual regime of white supremacy, Bey’s photographs come tenderly, black. They are on the side of the fugitive, offering the shelter of darkness and



Figure 4. Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black: Untitled #18 (Creek and House)*, 2017. Gelatin silver print, 44 × 55 in. Copyright Dawoud Bey. Courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago.

the protection of obscurity. They refuse the bright white light of exposure, depicting instead the shield of darkness. And in fact the fugitive's escape from slavery often took place under the cover of darkness—the shelter of woods and night, or the dissemblance of disguise. Harriet Tubman, the famous conductor of the Underground Railroad, moved at night with her “passengers,” sleeping in the woods by day. Indeed, Douglass wrote of Tubman: “The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism.”¹³ Bey's dark prints recall the midnight skies under which those in flight took cover.

Bey's photographs imagine the point of view of runaways and the times and spaces they navigated in claiming their freedom. Once again, although the prints are uniformly dark, they are not unreadable. In *Untitled #18 (Creek and House)* a seemingly impassable landscape of plants and trees dominates the foreground, and one sees in the back left corner a house (fig. 4). In this image Bey has tilted the plane of his large-format view camera, accentuating the ter-



Figure 5. Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black: Untitled #2 (Trees and Farmhouse)*, 2017. Gelatin silver print, 44 × 55 in. Copyright Dawoud Bey. Courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago.

rain in the foreground and highlighting the difficulty of passing through it. The small creek visible in the middle of the frame provides the clearest path, but it would be a cold and miserable track in the leafless, winter landscape. In *Untitled #2 (Trees and Farmhouse)*, one is in a forest, behind trees, looking at a still, dark house (fig. 5). No lights are on and there is no sign of human life. A long tree trunk just to the right of center divides the frame, and leaves, vines, and undergrowth dominate the foreground. *Untitled #4 (Leaves and Porch)* provides a much closer view of the house, from just behind a bush (fig. 6). Here one is on the threshold of entering the house, and the leaves nearest to the viewer are blurred.

Bey's photographs of stations on the Underground Railroad imagine the viewpoint of fugitives, and in this way they are in sync with another contemporary vision of the clandestine network. Colson Whitehead imagines the perspective of the self-emancipated in a similar vein in his recent novel, *The Underground Railroad*. In Whitehead's narrative, Caesar and Cora, two



Figure 6. Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black: Untitled #4 (Leaves and Porch)*, 2017. Gelatin silver print, 44 × 55 in. Copyright Dawoud Bey. Courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago.

runaways, wind through the forest on their way to an Underground Railroad station, afraid to risk the more direct route that would take them through people's land.¹⁴ They take a "shallow track in the woods" that allows them "to barely see houses through the brush."¹⁵ In another episode in Cora's harrowing journey, she is escorted in a wagon, from which she emerges to creep around the side of a yellow house, and then onto the back porch, and finally inside.¹⁶

Writing fiction in the twenty-first century, Whitehead imagines the precarious paths of fugitives and depicts their encounters with stationmasters in detail. Actual fugitives in the nineteenth century were much more circumspect in their narratives out of necessity. Douglass, for example, lays out the reasons for his caution and refusal to articulate the particulars of his escape in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845):

Before narrating any of the peculiar circumstances, I deem it proper to make known my intention not to state all the facts connected with the transaction. My reasons for pursuing this course may be understood from the following: First, were I to give a minute statement of all the facts, it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties. Secondly, such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders than has existed heretofore among them; which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother bondman might escape his galling chains. I deeply regret the necessity that impels me to suppress any thing of importance connected with my experience of slavery. . . . I would keep the merciless slaveholder profoundly ignorant of the means of flight adopted by the slave. . . . Let us render the tyrant no aid; let us not hold the light by which he can trace the footprints of our flying brother.¹⁷

Douglass leaves the specifics of his escape in the dark in order to protect the path of other fugitives and the people who might help them along the way. Referring to this historical context, Bey's dark images evoke not only the cover of night under which many escaped, but also the cover of secrecy and obfuscation that protected the Underground Railroad, its stationmasters and helpers, as well as its travelers. With his dark photographs Bey, too, symbolically refuses to "hold the light" of exposure.

Bey's work does not exactly record stations of the Underground Railroad, although it does represent them.¹⁸ With so little material history available in the landscape, Bey could not undertake a strictly documentary project, and that was not his intent in any case. In fact, he has said that the house he photographed in *Untitled #1 (Picket Fence and Farmhouse)* is close to a very *uninteresting-looking* house believed to be a site on the Underground Railroad (fig. 2). Having no qualms about photographing the better-looking building, Bey has said, with a wink, "You would have had to pass this house" to get to the station.¹⁹

To represent without exactly recording is another inventive reworking of the usual dynamics of photography. It was important to Bey to make his images close to the actual sites of stations of the Underground Railroad, to walk along the paths taken by fugitives, but beyond that his acts of representation do not depend on factual accuracy. And this is more than simply artistic license. It is a creative endeavor that relies on what Bey has called an act of "radical imagination." This is imagination put to expanding and enhancing the historical record, an act of imagination necessary to understand a historical truth that cannot be recorded otherwise.²⁰

Photography and Fugitivity

Despite the relative invisibility of the Underground Railroad, some documents of the network clearly remain, including the records of stationmasters that were not destroyed, and the accounts of runaways who wrote about their escapes or narrated them to others. Photographic evidence also exists in the nineteenth-century portraits of Vigilance Committee members and of fugitives and conductors of the Underground Railroad. Among the latter is a recently discovered photograph of Tubman that shows the conductor of the Underground Railroad in a new light, pictured as an elegant middle-class woman. The *carte de visite* is the earliest known photograph of Tubman, made by the photographer Benjamin F. Powelson in 1868 or 1869, and it is the final image in an album once owned by the white abolitionist Emily Howland, Tubman's friend and neighbor in Auburn, New York (fig. 7).²¹ The photograph, made after the Civil War, and after her years of transporting fugitives, shows Tubman seated sideways on a chair in front of a plain backdrop that reaches down to a patterned floor. She rests her left arm in her lap and her right arm against the back of the chair on which she sits, allowing her fingers to drape down. Tubman has parted her wavy hair down the middle, and pulled it back tight, covering her ears, in the severe style of the day. She looks just off to the side of the camera, and her eyes shine in the light. Under the bend of Tubman's arm the polished, thin curved stays of the chair's back are visible, and they visually echo the delicate folded pleats in the lace of her dark blouse. The blouse is an intricate double-layered construction, with a cutout panel that bends across Tubman's shoulders and chest, a delicate lace overlay, ruched and ruffled sleeves and cuffs, and a row of tiny buttons down the center front. It is topped with a stiff white collar that crosses high at Tubman's neck. The blouse is gathered at her small waist, where it meets a voluminous checked skirt that fans out to the floor, completely covering her legs, ankles, and shoes, and extends beyond the right edge of the photographic frame. Along the bottom of her skirt someone has written in pencil, in large looping script, "Harriet Tubman."²²

The photograph has been cut slightly irregularly by hand, and mounted on a standard cardboard back, printed with two red bordering lines, a thin line running just inside a thicker band. On the back of the card mount the photographer's name and address has been stamped in blue ink: "Powelson, Photographer, 77 Genesee-St. Auburn, New York." At the bottom of the card another note stamped in blue ink advises: "Copies can be had from this Negative" (fig. 8). The small paper prints of the *carte de visite* were inexpensive and



Figure 7. Benjamin F. Powelson, Portrait of Harriet Tubman, 1868 or 1869. Carte de visite, albumen print on card mount, 10 × 6 cm. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

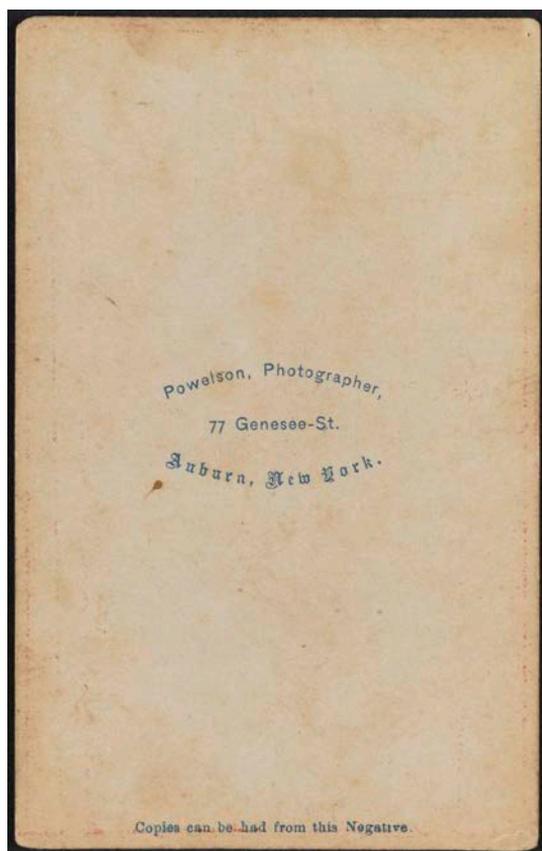


Figure 8. Benjamin F. Powelson, Portrait of Harriet Tubman (back), 1868 or 1869. Carte de visite, albumen print on card mount, 10 × 6 cm. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

endlessly reproducible, lending themselves to collection and circulation, and it was the custom of photographers at the time to keep negatives on hand, especially those of well-known people, so that the sitter or others could purchase prints at a later date.

Born in 1822, Tubman would have been forty-six or forty-seven at the time this carte de visite was made, and living in the North for roughly twenty of those years, having escaped her enslavement in Maryland in 1849. If it is in fact the earliest photograph of Tubman (and this remains unknown), it is somewhat late in the history of photography. The image was made seven or eight years after Douglass first heralded the revolutionary power of the medium,

and four or five years after Sojourner Truth began copyrighting and selling her own cartes de visite to support herself. By 1867 Douglass had posed for fifty different portraits.²³ Tubman's relative obscurity in the visual record is likely due to the nature of her work: as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, she had to remain undiscovered and invisible as much as possible as she made her return trips (at least thirteen) to the South to rescue others.²⁴ Indeed, before 1864, when Maryland abolished slavery, and 1865, which saw the end of the Civil War and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery, Tubman's photograph would have put her at risk.²⁵ If produced and circulated earlier, an image like Powelson's, with its striking likeness, and the photographer's address printed on the back, might have aided slave catchers in apprehending and imprisoning Tubman in her adopted hometown.²⁶ Indeed, by 1859 there was said to be a reward of twelve thousand dollars for her capture in Maryland.²⁷

Before the abolition of slavery, the photographic image could be used to assist slaveholders in the surveillance of black subjects deemed white property. As Matthew Fox-Amato has argued, "Every slave portrait, no matter how benevolent it seemed, could be used as a tool to police slaves' movement."²⁸ In accord with the logics of exposure, the portrait could be employed to discover fugitives, uncovering their whereabouts and illuminating their paths. Fox-Amato and other scholars have detailed a remarkable case in which a white slaveholder, Louis Manigault, created wanted posters for a runaway named Dolly, affixing a cut photograph of the woman to his handwritten description of her. The photographs, initially made to display Manigault's property in Dolly as nurse to his child, are here cut, presumably to remove Manigault's child from the image, leaving only Dolly's head, neck, and shoulders, and the top of the ornately carved wooden chair on which she sits, visible in the image.²⁹ According to Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer, "The image functions as a component of his narrative of mastery, identifying her as stolen property. . . . The photograph is not a portrait of a young woman but visual confirmation of Manigault's ownership."³⁰ And yet, the photograph proclaims not only the white man's ownership but also the black woman's liberation: "Her photographic presence [reminds one] of her bodily absence from Manigault's plantation and possession."³¹ The photograph, used first to mark her service to Manigault's family and their claim to property in her, then cut and recontextualized in an effort to reclaim her after her escape, testifies to her self-liberation. As Willis and Krauthamer have said, in its new form it provides "one image of what freedom looked like."³²

Tubman herself used photographs to identify abolitionists on the Underground Railroad. According to the historian Catherine Clinton, “When she made contact with persons she had never met before, Tubman’s treasured pack of cartes-de-visite became her insurance policy. She showed these persons her images and asked them to name the people in the pictures to test their credentials. If they could identify the images of her antislavery friends, she felt secure, knowing she was dealing with someone who had a personal relationship with her comrades.”³³ In this way, “photographic images became instrumental to the protection of her clandestine activities. Because she was illiterate, letters of introduction were not appropriate. It could be a costly mistake if Tubman were to reveal her UGRR agenda to anyone but a fellow traveler. Her collection of photos of UGRR agents and comrades helped to prevent such mishaps.”³⁴ It is possible that other agents of the Underground Railroad used photographs in the same way, and had copies of cartes de visite of Tubman. But given her intimate understanding of the ways in which photographs could be used to identify individuals, it is also likely that Tubman, while a fugitive, would not have risked putting her own image into circulation in this way. It was safer to remain in the dark.

Other fugitives escaping via the Underground Railroad did occasionally allow themselves to be photographed. Sometimes stationmasters and operatives requested mementos from those they assisted, as Fox-Amato has outlined. Philadelphia Vigilance Committee members secured portraits of the fugitives Richard Easler and Abram Galloway, who escaped from North Carolina stowed below the deck of a ship, as well as Lear Green, who escaped from slavery in Baltimore inside a chest, like the more famous Henry “Box” Brown. In 1862, at the request of the stationmaster Levi Coffin, the Cincinnati-based African American photographer J. P. Ball photographed a fugitive woman with two soldiers, Jesse L. Berch and Frank M. Rockwell of the Twenty-Second Wisconsin Volunteers, who helped her to escape (fig. 9).³⁵ One wonders at the recklessness of operatives seeking photographic documentation of their work, and the relative choice fugitives would have had in complying with these requests when they were so entirely at the mercy of strangers. Perhaps fugitive sitters saw the images as taunts to their purported masters, or perhaps they felt coerced into presenting themselves before the camera at the demands of others, required to engage in a photographic exchange as the price of freedom.



Ball's photograph of the unnamed woman with the soldiers is especially unsettling in this regard. In the *carte de visite*, an African American woman sits, facing the camera directly. She wears a light-colored dress, cinched at her small waist, which covers her legs and shoes completely, sweeping out in a wide fan across the patterned floor, and partly obscuring the legs of the two white men who stand on either side of her. A dark shawl is draped over her shoulders, and a dark hat rests on her head, casting a shadow across the right side of her face. Beneath her hat, her large eyes stare directly at the camera and later viewers. The two white men wear pants tucked into boots, dark wool coats with stand-up collars, and hats perched somewhat comically on their heads. Both men hold pistols cocked in their right hand, finger on the trigger, "brandishing their guns," as Fox-Amato has said, "in a common gesture for soldiers at the time."³⁶ But in the Ball photograph, this pose makes it appear

Figure 9.

James Presley Ball, Jesse L. Berch, quartermaster sergeant, 22 Wisconsin Regiment of Racine, Wis. [and] Frank M. Rockwell, postmaster 22 Wisconsin of Geneva, Wis., September 1862. *Carte de visite*, albumen print on card mount, 10 × 6 cm. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

as though the man on the left has his gun pointed directly at the head of the seated woman who stares at the camera. (He also rests his hand on the back of the chair in which she sits, or perhaps on her shoulder, in a protective or possessive gesture.) If one did not know the circumstances, one might assume that the image marked the capture of the woman by the two men, rather than her

rescue. The image metaphorically marks the precarity of the photograph for the fugitive, which, making visible her escape, might also aid in her capture.

Photographic portraits were not the only visual representations that slaveholders employed in their attempts to capture fugitives in the nineteenth century. Although Powelson's *carte de visite* may be the first photograph of Tubman, it was not the first visual representation of her in fugitivity. Indeed, Tubman was depicted visually soon after her first attempt at escape. Known as Araminta (only changing her name to Harriet after she gained her freedom), Tubman ran away with her two brothers, Ben and Henry, on September 17, 1849. (This first flight was not successful, and the brothers turned back, but Tubman set out again on her own within weeks.)³⁷ After the first escape attempt, Tubman's purported owner, Eliza Ann Brodess, placed an ad in the local paper, announcing a reward for the capture of Tubman and her brothers. The advertisement featured two small, type icons, one of a male and one of a female runaway.³⁸ The female icon shows a woman grasping a bundle in her right hand, her right knee bent and dress caught in the motion of flight. In this way, Tubman was depicted visually, but generically, as a "type," and

specifically as the cast-metal ornament number 66, available to printers for ten cents from L. Johnson's 1840 *Specimens of Printing Types*.³⁹ Supplementing the generic visual icon with a verbal description, Brodess declared, "Ranaway from the subscriber on Monday the 17th ult., . . . MINTY, aged about 27 years, is of a chestnut color, fine looking, and about 5 feet high."⁴⁰

The runaway advertisement was an important element of slavery's visual culture. As Jasmine Nichole Cobb has argued, such notices helped cultivate whiteness as a viewing position: "The runaway notice was the most prevalent and most powerful example of media used to develop White viewership."⁴¹ The icon played an important role in such notices because its meaning could be understood by both literate and illiterate viewers.⁴² But the icon served other, more subtle purposes as well. Counter to the detailed textual description of individuals, the icon reduced distinct people to "types," denoting them as runaways, and more fundamentally as "slaves," as property exchangeable according to monetary equivalences. As Marcus Wood has said of runaway notices: "The texts of the runaway advertisements challenged the abstraction of slave into property because they foregrounded the personal peculiarities of slaves. Consequently the legal and economic anonymity of the slave needed to be reasserted. The icon of the runaway provided the solution. This advertising logo is an image of appalling force, a statement that in the eyes of the law, and the eyes of the slave power, one runaway is the same as every runaway."⁴³ Wood's point is well taken: the icon provided an abstraction, a genre, a "type," a brute mark signifying ownership of a "slave." By publishing the icon, slaveholders solicited the assistance of other white people in their efforts of surveillance and capture. But in doing so, they also marked the failure of such surveillance, announcing the escape of a formerly enslaved person. And for the fugitive, the icon's very lack of distinguishing details, its generic exchangeability, might have provided a kind of anonymous cover in dark ink.

Like the runaway notice, photography, in the context of slavery, highlights a contest over ownership of the self played out through ownership of an image. The photograph and its circulation are bounded by the logics of exposure and possession: one might pass through the photograph, but one might also be caught by it. Indeed the photograph figures fixity as well as fugitivity. Even Douglass, who embraced photography enthusiastically and posed for the camera repeatedly, recognized the photograph as a vehicle of capture. He understood how one's image might become "a fixed fact, public property." In this way, even as he heralded photography as a progressive tool, Douglass also understood pictures to be "decid[ed]ly conservative."⁴⁴ The photograph might expose one not only to public view but also to the studied surveillance of slave catchers.

How might one be fixed photographically, and yet remain, like Douglass and Tubman, continually on the move?

Sojourner Truth did so by claiming ownership of her photographic portraits. She had certainly been photographed by 1861, and as the engraved frontispiece portrait included in her *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* suggests, she may have been photographed in daguerreotype form as early as 1850.⁴⁵ Truth understood how the right to own an image is mutually constituted by the right to reproduce it, and in 1864 she made the extraordinary decision to copyright her cartes de visite. This move is all the more remarkable because copyright law in the United States did not officially cover photographs until 1865, when it granted the right to “authors,” meaning photographers, rather than sitters. Truth copyrighted her cartes de visite a year before this legal determination, and she did so from the position of sitter, claiming the creative rights of ownership over her own portraits.⁴⁶ In her favorite photograph, she sits facing the camera, attired in a simple dark dress, adorned with a light fringed shawl that matches her stiff white collar and the crisp white scarf tied around her head (fig. 10). She looks at the camera calmly through small, wire-framed glasses. Truth rests her left arm on a small table covered in printed cloth, which also supports a book and a vase of flowers. In her hands she holds knitting, a sign of her industriousness.⁴⁷ The front of the card declares in red ink, just below her image: “I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance. SOJOURNER TRUTH.” The back notes, in red ink stamped across the middle of the card: “Entered according to the act of Congress, in the year 1864, by Sojourner Truth, in the Clerk’s Office, of the U.S. District Court, for the Eastern District of Michigan” (fig. 11). As Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby has demonstrated, “For her cartes de visite, Truth consistently demanded the printing of her name on both the front and the back. This is highly unusual: very few cartes de visite are imprinted with the sitter’s name or captions, and as far as I know, *none* have copyrights in the sitter’s name. This bears repeating: *I have found no other card from the period that features a copyright in the name of the sitter.*”⁴⁸

Truth’s carte de visite is most remarkable for its printed caption and copyright notice, but another intriguing detail in the image also stands out. The vase perched on the table appears to be a large glass beaker, likely used by the photographer to mix chemicals for film and paper developing. The evenly spaced horizontal lines on the vessel enable one to measure liquids precisely, and the lightly pinched spout on the top left rim helps one to pour liquids with ease. Here, then, the “parlor” trappings commonly featured in cartes de visite doubly reveal their construction for the camera. The photograph highlights Truth’s industriousness, but also subtly marks the photographer’s labor in making



Figure 10. Sojourner Truth, "I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance," 1864. Albumen silver print from glass negative, 8.5 × 5.4 cm. Purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2013. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

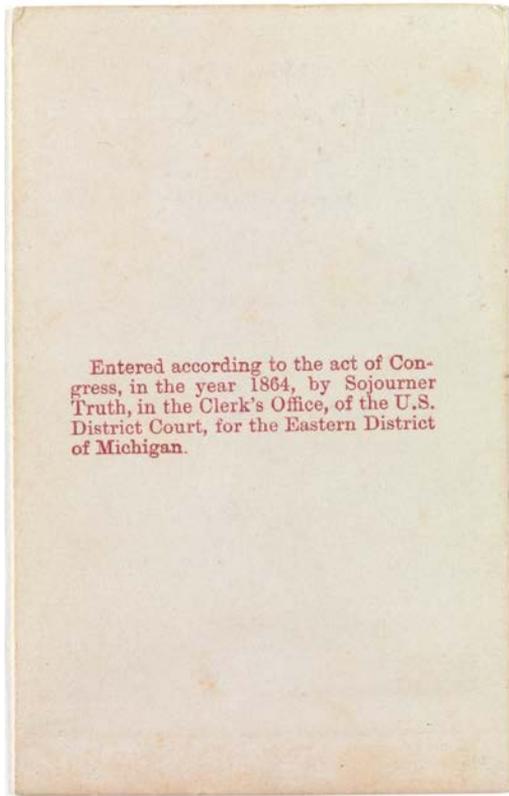


Figure 11.

Sojourner Truth, "I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance" (back), 1864. Albumen silver print from glass negative, 8.5 × 5.4 cm. Purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2013. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

the image. Truth and the photographer collaborate in the task, creating the image together. If, by claiming copyright over the image, Truth obscures the photographer, overwriting his claim of authorship, here the photographer subtly inscribes his

presence in the photograph, leaving a sign of his hand visible within its frame.

Truth reinforced her freedom by claiming ownership of her image while the Civil War raged. She had escaped from slavery in New York in 1826, and roughly six months later her freedom was legally ratified as the state abolished slavery in 1827.⁴⁹ When she and Tubman met at abolitionist conventions, Truth was a kind of senior stateswoman, twenty-five years Tubman's elder, and a free woman for decades. Tubman had also escaped slavery (in 1849), but her purported masters did not relinquish their claims to property in her until

slavery was abolished (in Maryland in 1864 and nationally in 1865), and she repeatedly put herself at risk in her returns to the South to help liberate others.⁵⁰ For Truth, a public figure on the antislavery lecture circuit, it made sense to craft and promote her image through photographs, increasing her notoriety and supporting herself and her cause by selling her image. For Tubman, still a fugitive, and continuing to physically assist others in their escape, it made better sense to stay in the dark.

Truth's unusual proprietary claims underscore nineteenth-century ambiguities and anxieties about the ownership of images, anxieties exponentially amplified for fugitives who were themselves physically claimed as property. In various ways, enslaved people negotiated their relationship to property and self, and property *in* self, through the photograph. As Truth's inventive tactics suggest, the struggle for ownership of the self could be waged through the photograph—through the shadow—for the substance.⁵¹ But as Tubman's apparent reticence to be photographed also demonstrates, refusing to be imaged represented another form of resistance to the dangers of exposure.⁵²

The General Strike

The Civil War significantly changed the routes of the Underground Railroad. Beginning in 1861, thousands of enslaved people sought refuge with the Union Army, and President Abraham Lincoln eventually declared them free. In this way, the “North” pushed south, and fugitives no longer had to reach the Northern states or Canada to secure freedom if they could cross the Union lines. According to Eric Foner, “Far more slaves—men, women, and children, of all ages—escaped to Union lines than had reached the free states and Canada during the preceding thirty years.”⁵³ Some called this a “National Underground Railroad” sponsored by the federal government.⁵⁴ W. E. B. Du Bois called it a “general strike” (fig. 12).

According to Du Bois, “When Northern armies entered the South they became armies of emancipation.” But this was not intentional. Indeed, as Du Bois proclaims, “It was the last thing they planned to be. The North did not propose to attack property. It did not propose to free slaves.”⁵⁵ But when the Union forces stopped turning away fugitives, self-emancipating people “entered upon a general strike against slavery.” “[They] ran away to the first place of safety and offered [their] services to the Federal Army.” “This withdrawal and bestowal of [their] labor decided the war.”⁵⁶

By entering into a general strike, the formerly enslaved nullified the labor force that the South relied on for food and money crops. Transferring that



Figure 12. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, Fugitive African Americans fording the Rappahannock, August 1862. Negative: glass, stereograph, wet collodion, 4 × 10 in. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

labor force to the Union Army, they built breastworks, prepared food, and performed other work in the military camps. Finally, in 1863, after white men rioted against the draft, African American men were allowed to join the Union forces as soldiers.⁵⁷ As Du Bois has said, “Here indeed was revolution.”⁵⁸ African American women also worked with the troops. Truth helped recruit African American soldiers, and Tubman actually joined the Union Army as a cook, nurse, and spy on the South Carolina Sea Islands.⁵⁹ In 1863 Tubman guided African American soldiers in two Union gunboats up the Combahee River on a raid that liberated over seven hundred enslaved men and women.⁶⁰

The fleeing of tens of thousands of formerly enslaved men, women, and children to the Union camps was, according to Du Bois, “a strike on a wide basis against the conditions of work. It was a general strike that involved directly in the end perhaps half a million people. They wanted to stop the economy of the plantation system, and to do that they left the plantations.”⁶¹ The general strike was a refusal of “the conditions of work” on the plantation, a refusal of slavery as a racial capitalist system.⁶² Du Bois emphasizes the labor economy of slavery, translating that economic system into the Marxist terms from which it is often excluded. Decoupling labor from the contract, Du Bois also unlinks labor from freedom, allowing the work of the enslaved to become visible *as work*. In Saidiya Hartman’s words, he refuses to allow labor to become “visible only in the context of freedom.”⁶³ By acknowledging the position of the enslaved individual as a *worker*, Du Bois evokes the category of labor most readily available to Eurocentric Marxist analysis and identifies enslaved labor as foundational both to the development of capitalism and to the revolutionary black project of racial justice in the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ As Lisa Lowe suc-



Figure 13. Dawoud Bey, *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago (January 11–April 14, 2019). Photograph by the author.

cinctly summarizes, Du Bois provides both “an economic analysis of U.S. slavery and a racial analysis of U.S. capitalism.”⁶⁵ In Du Bois’s history, the workers of the plantation initiated a

revolutionary general strike that decided the US Civil War.

In the context of this final instantiation of the Underground Railroad, Bey’s representation of its routes, his dark images of absent figures, might be said to perform a “general strike” against the conditions through which black subjects have come into photographic visibility (fig. 13). Bey’s dark images resist the forces of over- and underexposure according to which African American subjects have been made hypervisible as well as invisible. More pointedly, they resist the dynamics of exposure and capture that put fugitives at risk as they stole themselves to freedom on the Underground Railroad. Bey’s dark photographs are unwilling to “hold the light” of surveillance and disclosure; they refuse to inscribe black subjects into photography’s “light writing.” In *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*, the people who traveled the Underground Railroad are recalled in dark photographs that do not depict them. Choosing photography’s dark side, Bey shelters his subjects under the cover of the night sky, representing their points of view, but not their persons. In this way, black subjects remain unbound by the visual forces of white supremacy instituted on the plantation and continuing in its wake, as well as the frames of photography. In *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*, fugitives remain unfixed, resisting the capture of the slave catcher as well as the capture of the photograph.

Notes

1. Dawoud Bey, in conversation with Gaëlle Morel and Karen Irvine, Columbia College, Chicago, April 11, 2019.
2. For a discussion of SNCC photography and political posters, see Leigh Raiford, "Come Let Us Build a New World Together," in *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 67–128. Raiford reproduces the SNCC poster that features Lyon's photograph in the article version of this chapter. See Raiford, "'Come Let Us Build a New World Together': SNCC and Photography of the Civil Rights Movement," *American Quarterly* 59.4 (2007): 11–34.
3. For a discussion of this portrait and the historical context in which it was made, see Colin L. Westerbeck, "Frederick Douglass Chooses His Moment," *Museum Studies* 24.2 (1999): 155–61, www.artic.edu/collections/books/museum-studies/preview-issue/frederick-douglass.
4. My thinking here is informed by Gabrielle Foreman's argument that some light-skinned fugitives "passed through whiteness" on their way to freedom and to claiming a self-determined black identity. The performance of whiteness was a temporary ruse on the way to confirming blackness. I am suggesting that fugitives might have viewed photography similarly, as a representation to be used along the way to self-possession, as a way station on the road to freedom. See P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Who's Your Mama? 'White' Mulatta Genealogies, Early Photography, and Anti-Passing Narratives of Slavery and Freedom," *American Literary History* 14.3 (2002): 505–39. The essay was republished as chapter 5 in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 132–66.
5. Bey's installation of this work at the Art Institute of Chicago literally framed *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* within a history of photography through which one had to physically pass in order to enter the gallery that presented Bey's images. For this reason, I think it makes sense to follow Bey's lead and consider his work within a cultural history of photography of the Underground Railroad. The task of another essay would be to situate Bey's *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* in relation to other contemporary artistic representations of slavery. In this vein, Glenn Ligon's *Runaways* series (1993) might prove an interesting counterpoint for their play on the runaway notice. While Ligon focuses on how a white gaze was trained to view fugitives, Bey imagines the viewpoint of fugitives themselves. For a recent assessment of Ligon's work in the context of other contemporary artists who take slavery as their subject, see Huey Copeland, *Bound to Appear: Art, Slavery, and the Site of Blackness in Multicultural America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 109–50.
6. Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Norton, 2015), 10.
7. Roy DeCarava is another photographer who heralded the darkness of photography in his documentation and celebration of African American life. See Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1984).
8. Although she focuses on the blinding brightness of overexposure in Zora Neale Hurston's films, I have found Autumn Womack's discussion of overexposure as a "failure" . . . that calls into question cinema's fitness to capture and convey a 'true' account of enslavement" helpful in thinking about Bey's dark overexposures and the complicated relationship of photography to the Underground Railroad ("'The Brown Bag of Miscellany': Zora Neale Hurston and the Practice of Overexposure," *Black Camera* 7.1 [2015]: 129).
9. Shawn Michelle Smith, *At the Edge of Sight: Photography and the Unseen* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).
10. Darby English, "Beyond Black Representational Space," in *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 27–70. Many have written on hypervisibility and invisibility with regard to race. See Maurice O. Wallace, "On Dangers Seen and Unseen: Identity Politics and the Burden of Black Male Specularity," in *Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775–1995* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 19–50; and Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
11. For a discussion of the racialized structure of oversight on the plantation, see Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Oversight: The Ordering of Slavery," in *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 48–76. For a discussion of the surveillance of black bodies dur-

- ing slavery and beyond, including branding as well as forced illumination, see Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). For a discussion of the “peculiar ocularity” of slavery, see Jasmine Nichole Cobb, *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 34–41. For a discussion of all the violences that follow “in the wake” of transatlantic slavery, see Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
12. On the dynamics of capture, captive, and captivate that inform photography, see Lily Cho, “Capture and Captivation: Identifying Migrancy and the Making of Non-Citizens,” in *Imagining Everyday Life: Engagements with Vernacular Photography*, ed. Tina Campt, Brian Wallis, Marianne Hirsch, and Gil Hochberg (New York: Steidl / The Walther Collection, 2020), 121–26. In their darkness, Bey’s images are the inverse of the intensely bright video light Krista Thompson describes in her discussion of Jamaican dance hall performers, but the images nevertheless similarly perform a black subject’s freedom from photographic capture. In Thompson’s study performers come into visibility through the light, rather than the image. In Bey’s work, subjects remain absent from dark images. See Thompson, “Video Light: Dancehall and the Aesthetics of Spectacular Un-visibility in Jamaica,” in *Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 112–68.
 13. Quoted in Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: One World / Ballantine Books, 2003), 251.
 14. Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (New York: Anchor Books / Penguin Random House, 2018), 59.
 15. Whitehead, 62.
 16. Whitehead, 155.
 17. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 100–102.
 18. David Deitcher makes a distinction between what a photograph depicts and what it might be said to represent. See Deitcher, *Dear Friends: American Photographs of Men Together, 1840–1918* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 76, 132.
 19. Dawoud Bey, in conversation with Matthew Witkovsky and Jacqueline Terrasa, Art Institute of Chicago, January 11, 2019.
 20. In this way the project resonates with feminist antiracist visual acts of imagination epitomized by Cheryl Dunye’s film *The Watermelon Woman* and Zoe Leonard’s companion collection of photographs *The Fae Richards Archive*. For more on photography and imagination, see Amos Morris-Reich and Margaret Olin, eds., *Photography and Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
 21. For information about the photograph and Howland’s album, see Allison Keyes, “A Previously Unknown Portrait of a Young Harriet Tubman Goes on View,” Smithsonian.com, March 26, 2019, www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/previously-unknown-portrait-abolitionist-harriet-tubman-young-woman-goes-view-180971796/#Si0wRdu5GZpyAF0E.99.
 22. The Powelson carte de visite may have been made to coincide with the publication of Sarah H. Bradford’s biography, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, published in 1869. Sales of the biography were intended to help support Tubman, who still owed a mortgage on her house in Auburn, New York, and was caring for her elderly parents and other friends and relatives, even as she was also raising funds for freedmen’s relief efforts. Tubman had begun organizing fairs modeled on antislavery fairs in 1867 and 1868 to send funds to South Carolina for the relief of freedmen. See Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 241–42, 248–50.
 23. See John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, and Celeste-Marie Bernier, *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American* (New York: Liveright / Norton, 2015).
 24. After escaping in 1849, Tubman returned at least thirteen times to Maryland and helped lead seventy men, women, and children out of slavery. See Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 190.
 25. Maryland did not abolish slavery until November 1, 1864. See *A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland* (Annapolis: Maryland State Archives and the University of Maryland College Park, 2007), 16, 31.
 26. As Chantal N. Gibson and Monique Silverman have said of another image previously thought to be the earliest photograph of Tubman (an image made by Harvey B. Lindsley circa 1871–1876): “This

- visual record of the elusive freedom fighter, above ground with a bounty on her head, could not appear until her freedom was secure" ("Sur/Rendering Her Image: The Unknowable Harriet Tubman," in "The Portrait Issue / La question du portrait," special issue, *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 30.1–2 [2005]: 25).
27. Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 171.
 28. Matthew Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery: Photography, Human Bondage, and the Birth of Modern Visual Politics in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 64.
 29. Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer, *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 11–14; Jennifer Van Horn, "'The Dark Iconoclast': African Americans' Artistic Resistance in the Civil War South," *Art Bulletin* 99.4 (2017): 145–48; Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 64–67. Manigault's wanted poster for Dolly is included on page 179 in the *Manigault Plantation Journal* in the Southern Historical Collection of the Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It can be accessed online at dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/plantation/id/795/rec/1.
 30. Willis and Krauthamer, *Envisioning Emancipation*, 12.
 31. Willis and Krauthamer, 14.
 32. Willis and Krauthamer, 14.
 33. Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Back Bay Books / Little, Brown, 2004), 88–89. See also Gibson and Silverman, "Sur/Rendering Her Image," 27.
 34. Clinton, *Harriet Tubman*, 88. Franklin B. Sanborn, a member of John Brown's Secret Six, and Tubman's first biographer, wrote: "One of her means of security was to carry with her the daguerreotypes of her friends, and show them to each new person. If they recognized the likeness, then all was right" (quoted in Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 162–63).
 35. Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 148–54.
 36. Fox-Amato, 151.
 37. Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 78–80.
 38. Once again, the contemporary artist Glenn Ligon has worked with these icons in his *Runaways* series (1993).
 39. See Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 90, fig. 3.8.
 40. The advertisement is reproduced in Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 79.
 41. Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 42, 43 (quotation on p. 43).
 42. Cobb, 45.
 43. Wood, *Blind Memory*, 87.
 44. Frederick Douglass, "Pictures and Progress: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, on 3 December 1861," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews; Volume III: 1855–1863*, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 455.
 45. Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Enduring Truths: Sojourner's Shadows and Substance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 27–28.
 46. Grigsby, 138–39.
 47. Grigsby identifies this portrait as Truth's favorite. She also argues that "Truth associated knitting with industry and advancement, not gentility" (73, 81).
 48. Grigsby, 139.
 49. Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, a Symbol* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 22–24.
 50. Once again, Maryland did not abolish slavery until November 1, 1864. See *A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland*, 16, 31, msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/pdf/slavery_pamphlet.pdf.
 51. According to Nell Irvin Painter, "As a woman whose person had been the property of others . . . , Truth could cherish her portraits as her own literal embodiment" (*Sojourner Truth*, 198).
 52. Tina M. Campt has studied expressions of refusal in colonial photography, reading subjects' self-fashioning as quiet refusals of the colonial gaze. Thinking with Campt, I am suggesting that Tubman's apparent reticence to be photographed may represent an overt refusal of photography in fugitivity. See Campt, "Striking Poses in a Tense Grammar: Stasis and the Frequency of Black Refusal," in *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 47–67.
 53. Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 223–24.
 54. Foner, 223.

55. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880* (1935; repr. New York: Free Press, 1998), 55.
56. Du Bois, 57. Du Bois's language here is gendered (“he” and “his”), but as he acknowledges elsewhere, both men and women participated in the general strike.
57. Du Bois, 103–4.
58. Du Bois, 91.
59. Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 225.
60. Foner, 225.
61. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 67.
62. For Cedric J. Robinson, there is no other capitalism—racial capitalism *is* capitalism; capitalism *is* racial capitalism. Capitalism grew out of an already racialized economy, and it further aided and abetted the formation of racial distinctions among the working classes in the nineteenth century. Even within the narrow confines of Great Britain, this was the case. The proletariat named by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the English working classes of the Industrial Revolution, developed in a national-racial milieu forged in the wake of the English colonial *plantation* system in Ireland. See especially chapter 2, “The English Working Class as the Mirror of Production,” in Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 29–44.
63. But, as Hartman cautions, labor does not become “free” after emancipation in any case: “If the nascent mantle of sovereign individuality conferred rights and entitlements, it also served to obscure the coercion of ‘free labor’” (Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 143, 120). And as Tiffany Lethabo King has argued, the enslaved exceeds the category of “laborer”: “When we look at and contend with the fact or experience of slavery, the enslaved Black body presents a remainder and something in excess of labor” (*The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019], 118).
64. Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 199–203.
65. Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 166.