

James Baldwin was fearless in confronting racism, injustice and hypocrisy.



James Baldwin

James Baldwin (1924-1987) was a groundbreaking American novelist, essayist and social critic whose powerful writing explored the intersections of race, sexuality and identity in America. His masterful works, including *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *The Fire Next Time*, and *Another Country*, established him as one of the 20th century's most important literary voices on civil rights and social justice.

As a Black gay man in mid-20th-century America, Baldwin courageously lived openly at a time when both racism and homophobia posed significant dangers. His 1956 novel *Giovanni's Room*, which depicted a same-sex relationship, was revolutionary for its honest portrayal and remains a cornerstone of LGBTQ+ literature. Baldwin spent much of his adult life in France, finding greater freedom to live authentically while continuing to write penetrating critiques of American society.

Baldwin's essays and speeches brilliantly articulated the connections between different forms of oppression, making him an early voice for what would later be called intersectionality. His famous quote, "Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within," speaks to his lifelong advocacy for authenticity and human dignity. His work continues to inspire LGBTQ+ activists and writers who seek to address multiple dimensions of identity and justice.



NYSUT, a statewide union of professionals, proudly supports equal rights for all people, a non-discriminatory workplace and non-discrimination based on gender identity and expression. NYSUT's goal is that union members feel safe and welcome in their environment. For more on the contributions of LGBTQ individuals, visit nysut.org.