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## Water Burial

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*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Pamela Muirhead, Faculty Advisor  
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Oral Presentation O13.3

## **WATER BURIAL**

Korey Williams and Pamela Muirhead\*  
English Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

*Water Burial* is an extended multi-genre meditation on the energies that fuel and guide my living. Using poetry, drama, and prose, I tussle with the multiplicity of my identity—the interconnection of race, gender, class, religion, and sexuality—grappling to understand my queer Black experience. *Water Burial* is also my mode for addressing the sociopolitical dilemma challenging nearly all LGBT people of color, specifically Black queer people (i.e. heterosexism and homophobia within the Black community as well as racism in the white gay community). The process of composing *Water Burial* involved extensive reading in Black queer theory (Marlon B. Ross, Charles I. Nero, E. Patrick Johnson, Evelyn Hammonds, Laura Alexandra Harris, etc.) as well as Black queer literature (Cheryl Clarke, Audre Lorde, Sapphire, Carl Phillips, Reginald Shepherd, and *many* others). *Water Burial* is truly an interdisciplinary undertaking, integrating literary theory, cultural studies, and personal narrative in a creative writing context.