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Traci Dant

CASTING JAMES EARL JONES

If I were casting
the starring role
in a film about
my grandfather's life,

I'd need a man
with a regal voice
and massive body
who can walk

like he's got pigs
to feed and cows
to milk.
I'd need a man

who looks at women
like they're berries
and he can pick
his own.

I'd need someone
who's lived beside
the mountains of slavery.
Seen the bird

eyes of Jim Crow
and the Civil Rights
days of Lyndon Johnson.
I'd consider

Charles Dutton.
Ving Rhames.
Delroy Lindo.
Maybe even

a salt and peppered
Denzel.
But I'd cast
James Earl Jones. .

And see to it
that something
of my grandfather
came out of him.