

Bennington College Announces a \$4 million Gift to Support Poetry Initiative

Spring 2019 Poetry at Bennington Schedule Released

April 11, 2019

Bennington, VT: [Poetry at Bennington](#), a program of short-term residencies that brings established and emerging poets to Bennington College for public readings and close work with students, has been endowed with a gift of \$4 million from longstanding donors to the College. This gift advances the endowment goal of the recently announced \$150 million Bennington College capital campaign.

Since it was established in 2012, Poetry at Bennington has brought more than 50 poets to campus, including Poets Laureate and Pulitzer Prize winners, along with a diverse range of emerging and established poets. During the short-term residencies, the poets give public readings and engage directly with students through question-and-answer sessions, craft lectures, master classes, group writing exercises, and individual consultations. The events are free and regularly attract students from neighboring colleges, as well as poetry enthusiasts across southern Vermont and western Massachusetts.

Previous visiting poets have included Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award Winners Timothy Donnelly, Ross Gay, Matthea Harvey, and Dawn Lundy Martin; Poets Laureate Charles Simic, Mark Strand, and Natasha Trethewey; MacArthur "Genius" Grant Award Winners C.D. Wright and Claudia Rankine; National Book Award Winners Daniel Borzutzky, Robin Coste Lewis, Mark Doty, and Terrance Hayes; and Pulitzer Prize Winners Rae Armantrout and Jorie Graham.

"Bennington has an extraordinary poetry legacy: from Mary Oliver, Howard Nemerov, and W.H. Auden, who came here to teach; others, like e. e. cummings and Elizabeth Bishop, came here to read; and more, like Anne Waldman '66, Mary Ruefle '74, and also recent alumni like Safiya Sinclair '10 and Anaïs Duplan '14 came here to study and to develop their craft," said **President Mariko Silver**. "Poetry at Bennington extends this legacy and allows us to bring an even greater number of renowned writers to campus and to the region. We are enormously grateful to the donors who have partnered with us to create this extraordinary program and to now ensure it will continue in perpetuity."

"We want our students to imagine what is possible, including how they can have an active writing practice," said **Poetry at Bennington Director Michael Dumanis**. "Beyond giving us the opportunity to hear extraordinary poetry, these visits help form a community."

The connections forged between poets and students often last beyond the short-term residencies. Visiting poets have at times continued advising students about publishing their work and applying to graduate programs. Recent literature graduates have gone on to MFA programs at NYU, Brown, Cornell, Warren Wilson, Arizona State University, the University of Alabama, and the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. Alumni are publishing books of poetry and seeing their work appear in such journals as *Boston Review* and *Denver Quarterly*.