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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CAVE CANEM POETS READ IN PITTSBURGH & GREENSBURG

#### *North America's "Home for Black Poetry" Presents 16th Annual Showcase*

**BROOKLYN, NEW YORK** (June 6, 2011) — **With five public readings, June 20-24, 2011**, Cave Canem Foundation, North America's premier "home for Black poetry," will present the work of eight world-class poets and acquaint greater Pittsburgh audiences with the voices of 54 emerging African American poets participating in the organization's writing retreat, held annually in June at the University of Pittsburgh in Greensburg. On June 20, 7:30 pm, acclaimed poets **Terrance Hayes**, **Carl Phillips** and **Claudia Rankine** will read at Village Hall, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. On June 23, 7:30 pm, **City of Asylum/Pittsburgh** will host a tented reading on Monterey Street, Pittsburgh, featuring Cave Canem co-founders **Toi Derricotte** and **Cornelius Eady**, faculty member **Natasha Trethewey** and guest poet **Amiri Baraka**. On June 21, 22 and 24, 7:30 pm, poetry lovers will enjoy "lightning rounds," also presented on the Greensburg campus, as retreat participants share four-minute samplings of verse written during their week-long study with Derricotte, Eady, Hayes, Phillips, Rankine and Trethewey. Events are free and open to the public. Lead funding is provided by the University of Pittsburgh; additional funding comes from the National Endowment for the Arts; The Heinz Endowments; Poetry Foundation; Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield; and The Gertrude E. Paff Memorial Fund, the John B. Sloan Endowment, the James F. and Ellen C. Pitcairn Fund, and the Aims C. and Betty Lee Coney Memorial Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation.

#### EVENTS SCHEDULE

- **June 20**, 7:30 pm, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg: Hayes, Phillips & Rankine.
- **June 21 & 22**, 7:30 pm, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg: Fellows Lightning Rounds.
- **June 23**, 7:30 pm, City of Asylum/Pittsburgh, Monterey Street: Baraka, Derricotte, Eady & Trethewey.
- **June 24**, 7:30 pm, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg: Fellows Lightning Round.

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**JUNE 20: POETS AT UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH AT GREENSBURG**

**Terrance Hayes** is the author of four collections of poetry, including *Lighthhead* (Penguin, 2010), winner of the 2010 National Book Award; *Wind in a Box* (2006), named one of the Best 100 Books of 2006 by *Publishers Weekly*; *Hip Logic* (2002), which won National Poetry Series and was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Award, as well as runner-up for the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets; and *Muscular Music* (1999), winner of both the Whiting Writers Award and the Kate Tufts Discovery Award. He has been a recipient of many honors, including two Pushcart selections, four Best American Poetry selections, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the Guggenheim Foundation. He is Professor of Creative Writing at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Carl Phillips** is the author of numerous books of poetry, including *Speak Low* (Farrar, 2009), a finalist for the 2010 National Book Award; *Quiver of Arrows: Selected Poems 1986-2006*; *Riding Westward*; and *The Rest of Love*, a finalist for the National Book Award, and winner of the Theodore Roethke Memorial Foundation Poetry Prize and the Thom Gunn Award for Gay Male Poetry. His most recent collection, *Double Shadow*, was released by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in March, 2011. Additional honors include the 2006 Academy of American Poets Fellowship, an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Pushcart Prize, induction into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Library of Congress. He is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and Professor of English and of African and Afro-American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, where he also teaches in the Creative Writing Program.

**Claudia Rankine** is the author of four collections of poetry: *Nothing in Nature Is Private*, recipient of the Cleveland State Poetry Prize; *The End of the Alphabet*; *Plot*; and most recently, *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*. Her work has been published in numerous journals and several anthologies, including *Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to the Present*, *Best American Poetry 2001*, *Giant Step: African American Writing at the Crossroads of the Century* and *The Garden Thrives: Twentieth Century African-American Poetry*. With Juliana Spahr, she is co-editor of *American Women Poets in the 21st Century: Where Lyric Meets Language*. Recipient of the 2005 Academy of American Poets Fellowship, she is the Henry G. Professor of English at Pomona College.

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### JUNE 23: POETS AT CITY OF ASYLUM/PITTSBURGH

**Amiri Baraka** is the author of over 40 books of essays, poems, drama, and music history and criticism, including *The Essence of Reparations*, a collection of essays, and *Somebody Blew Up America & Other Poems*. The founder of the 1960s Black Arts Movement in Harlem, Baraka has been the subject of numerous documentary films, including Mario Van Peeble's *Poetic License* for The Sundance Channel and St. Clair Bourne's *In Motion: Amiri Baraka*. Professor Emeritus of the State University of New York at Stony Brook and former Poet Laureate of New Jersey, his honors include an Obie Award, the American Academy of Arts & Letters award, the James Weldon Johnson Medal for contributions to the arts, and grants from The Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He lives in Newark, New Jersey with his wife, the author Amina Baraka; together they head up the word-music ensemble, Blue Ark: The Word Ship and co-direct Kimako's Blues People, an artspace.

Cave Canem co-founder Toi Derricotte is the author of five books of poetry, including *Tender*, winner of the 1998 Paterson Poetry Prize, and *The Undertaker's Daughter*, forthcoming from University of Pittsburgh Press. Her literary memoir, *The Black Notebooks*, was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and won the 1998 Annisfield-Wolf Award for Non-Fiction and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association Nonfiction Award. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America; two Pushcart Prizes; the Distinguished Pioneering of the Arts Award from the United Black Artists; the Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award from Poets & Writers, Inc.; the 2008 Elizabeth Kray Award for Service to Poetry from Poets House; and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Guggenheim Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. She is Professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh.

The author of eight books of poetry, most recently, *Hardheaded Weather* (Penguin, 2008), Cave Canem co-founder **Cornelius Eady** received the 1985 Lamont Prize from the Academy of American Poets for *Victims of the Latest Dance Craze*. His *The Gathering of My Name* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama, and a production of *Brutal Imagination* won the 2002 Oppenheimer Award for the best first play by an American Playwright. He is the recipient of an NEA Fellowship in Literature; a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry; a Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Traveling Scholarship; a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship; The *Prairie Schooner* Strousse Award (1994); and the Elizabeth Kray Award for service to poetry from Poets House. He is Professor of English and the Miller Family Endowed Chair in Literature and Writing at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

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**Natasha Trethewey** is the author of *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (University of Georgia Press, 2010); *Native Guard* (Houghton Mifflin), for which she won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize; *Bellocq's Ophelia* (Graywolf, 2002), named a Notable Book for 2003 by the American Library Association; and *Domestic Work* (Graywolf, 2000), selected for the inaugural Cave Canem Poetry Prize by Rita Dove. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Study Center, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Bunting Fellowship Program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. Her poems have appeared in such journals and anthologies as *American Poetry Review*, *Callaloo*, *Kenyon Review*, *The Southern Review*, *New England Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, and *The Best American Poetry* 2000 and 2003. Currently, she is Professor of English at Emory University, where she holds the Phillis Wheatley Distinguished Chair in Poetry.

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#### CAVE CANEM FOUNDATION

Founded in 1996 by poets Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady to remedy the under-representation and isolation of African American poets in MFA programs and writing workshops, **Cave Canem is a home for the many voices of African American poetry and is committed to cultivating the artistic and professional growth of African American poets.** Called “*the* major watering hole and air pocket for black poetry” by poet Nikky Finney, Cave Canem has grown from an initial gathering of 26 poets to become an influential movement with a renowned faculty and a high-achieving national fellowship of over 300. Its programs include a week-long summer retreat at the University of Pittsburgh in Greensburg, first and second book prizes, Legacy Conversations, a Poets on Craft series, writing workshops, publications and national readings and panels. Such renowned poets as Elizabeth Alexander, Lucille Clifton, Yusef Komunyakaa, Carl Phillips and Sonia Sanchez number among the organization’s faculty and judges. Cave Canem fellows have over 150 books in print across several genres and have received many prestigious awards—Guggenheim, Lannan Literary, NEA and Stegner Fellowships; the Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets; and the Whiting Writers’ Award, among others. To date, the organization has published *Gathering Ground: A Reader Celebrating Cave Canem’s First Decade* (University of Michigan Press, 2006) and *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South* (The University of Georgia Press, 2007). For more information, go to **[cavecanempoets.org](http://cavecanempoets.org)**.

#### CITY OF ASYLUM/PITTSBURGH

Founded in 2004, **City of Asylum/Pittsburgh** provides sanctuary to writers exiled under threat of persecution, so

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they can write without repression or danger. For two years, the program provides a home on Sampsonia Way, a living stipend of \$30,000 per year, medical benefits, and help transitioning to stable independence while in exile. City of Asylum/Pittsburgh was the first U.S. city to join the North American Network of Cities of Asylum founded by Nobel Prize Laureates Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, Russell Banks, Richard Wiley, Michael Ondaatje and Carolyn Forché. To date, every writer hosted by City of Asylum/Pittsburgh has created a full-length work while in residence. For more information, visit [www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org](http://www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org).

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