Come Listen All! National Portrait Gallery To Host Poetry Reading

Poetry Month Program Features Three Award-winning Poets

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery will host a poetry reading with three award-winning poets: Guggenheim Fellow and Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award-winner John Koethe, Pulitzer Prize-winner Yusef Komunyakaa and Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Muldoon. This event, with book signing to follow, will take place Sunday, April 21, at 2 p.m. in the Portrait Gallery’s Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium.

This gathering will mark the end of the exhibition “Poetic Likeness: Modern American Poets,” closing April 28, and will be held in anticipation of the publication of Lines in Long Array: A Civil War Commemoration, Poems and Photographs, Past and Present, to be released this fall (National Portrait Gallery; distributed by Smithsonian Books). The 136-page book contains 12 newly commissioned poems on the Civil War by major contemporary poets. Koethe, Komunyakaa and Muldoon have contributed original work to the publication; they are among the most important contemporary poets now writing in English. Following the event, the poets will sign their most recent books.

The reading and the poets will be introduced by Portrait Gallery historian and curator of “Poetic Likeness” David C. Ward. Ward is also co-editor of Lines in Long Array.

This program is presented in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America and the Library of Congress.

Koethe is the author of nine books of poetry, including Domes (1973), which received the Frank O’Hara Award; Falling Water (1997), which received the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award; and Ninety-Fifth Street (2009), which received the Lenore Marshall Prize. His most recent book is ROTC Kills (2012), and he is also the author of books on Wittgenstein and skepticism. He is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.
Komunyakaa’s 13 books of poetry include *Taboo, Dien Cai Dau, Neon Vernacular*—for which he received the Pulitzer Prize, *Warhorses* and most recently *The Chameleon Couch*. His many honors include the William Faulkner Prize (Université de Rennes, France), the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and the 2011 Wallace Stevens Award. His plays, performance art and libretti have been performed internationally and include *Saturnalia, Testimony* and *Gilgamesh*. He teaches at New York University.

Muldoon is the author of 11 collections of poetry, including *Moy Sand and Gravel*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize. Muldoon has also received the Shakespeare Prize and the Aspen Prize for Poetry. A fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he is also an honorary fellow of Hertford College, Oxford. He is the Howard G.B. Clark University Professor at Princeton and poetry editor of the *New Yorker*.

National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story.


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