FEATURED...

LYRAE VAN-CLIFFE STEFANO

EVIE SHOCKLEY

KEVIN YOUNG

TOM ROBERTS ON PIANO

CAVE CANEM

POETS

7:30 P.M.
**Cave Canem** was founded by Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady in 1996 to remedy the under-representation and isolation of African American poets in the literary landscape. Derricotte and Eady were visiting Pompeii when they had the idea for the organization.

There, in the vestibule of the House of the Tragic Poet, they saw embedded in the floor a mosaic of a black dog springing forward but held back by a chain. Below it are the words, CAVE CANEM, Latin for BEWARE THE DOG. This same image is used as the mark for Cave Canem, but in this version, the chain is broken.

Since its inception, Cave Canem has sought to cultivate the artistic and professional growth of Black poets. It's flagship program, the Cave Canem Retreat, was first held in a monastery in Esopus, New York with 26 poets. Each year since then, Black poets are invited to become fellows by being accepted to and attending the retreat.

Cave Canem has grown into an influential movement with a renowned faculty and an international fellowship of nearly 500. It's programs and publications enlarge the American literary canon, democratize archives; and expand for students, poets, and readers the notion of what's possible and valuable in poetry. Its programs include an annual retreat, community workshops, lectures, and reading and panel series. Its three book prizes, delivered in collaboration with five prestigious presses, have launched the careers of several poets.
Cave Canem Annual Report 2020

Cave Canem Serves Black Poets

POETRY

PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Dear poetry lovers,

2020 was a year of growth and change for the fellowship. During this time, the Board of Directors and staff of Cave Canem accomplished much in the mission to create a dynamic, thriving “home for Black poetry.”

We established a Faculty & Fellows Advisory Committee that meets regularly and has taking on initiatives such as fundraising and archival development.

We know that the poets we serve share many of the challenges facing our society as a whole in this ongoing experience of political unrest, demands for racial justice, and the ongoing health and economic crisis created by COVID-19.

We initiated the call for several legacy organizations (Obsidian Lit, Hurston-Wright Foundation, Furious Flower, and The Watering Hole) to gather in a collective partnership, Getting Word. This fellowship of fellowships had a successful fundraising effort and is continuously meeting to plan for a 2022 fundraising drive in June and July of 2022.

We have increased our social media awareness on multiple platforms, increasing our presence by 10%.

We are currently developing several collaborative projects across the country, featuring museums, fellowship opportunities, and publishing. And of course, we have received generous support from our individual donors.

We have also secured funding opportunities with several new foundations, including Humanities New York, the Opportunity Fund and renewed support from the Ford Foundation.

Our fellows, who now number more than 500, are out in the world writing, teaching, studying, organizing, collaborating, and spreading the wealth of Black poetry wherever they read a poem or write a line on a scrap of paper. As in many past years, Cave Canem poets are winning recognition for their work from Genius awards to book awards. The work of Cave Canem continues into our 25th year. We are rewriting our story, poem after poem, book by book. Please be sure to check out one of our programs in the coming months to witness the continuing legacy of one of the greatest experiments in American literature, this fellowship of poets who are writing their own past and futures into stunning clarity and wonderment. We look forward to seeing you in the audience!

Forwards Ever, Backwards Never!

Tyehimba Jess
President
Cave Canem Foundation, Inc.

Cave Canem enters its 25th anniversary year in a unique position of accomplishing notable growth against the backdrop of an unprecedented year.

Cave Canem Annual Report 2020
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Cave Canem Annual Report 2020
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Cave Canem continues to connect with Black poets globally, and our reach extends to poetry lovers of all backgrounds and experiences. The majority of our public programs engage audiences in the New York City area, but our partnerships with several organizations take us to cities across the United States. Whenever and however a Black poet finds Cave Canem on their journey, there is a place for them.
PUBLIC PROGRAMS

“New Works” is a program series where Cave Canem elevates and celebrates a new work by a Black poet in conversation with the poet and their contemporaries.

2020 Toi Derricotte & Cornelius Eady Chapbook Prize Reading
April 27, 2020
Virtual

2019 Cave Canem Poetry Prize Reading: Chekwube Danladi
October 2, 2020
Virtual

New Works: Black Queer Debuts with Jubi Arriola-Headley, Taylor Johnson, and Romeo Oriogun
December 10, 2020
Virtual

New Works: Cave Canem Fellows
Aricka Foreman, Dave Harris, and Valencia Robin
November 12, 2020
Virtual

Poets on Craft conversations pair mid-career black poets with poets of color for candid moderated conversations on writing.

Launched in 2008, Poets on Craft features award-winning poets in the early-to-middle stages of their careers. Poets meet in moderated conversation, discussing aesthetics, the role of the contemporary poet and other topical issues. Brief readings by two poets precede conversations; Q & A and book signings follow.

Poets on Craft: Writing “The Life of…”
with Rita Dove and Janice N. Harrington
October 28, 2020
Virtual

Terrance Hayes inaugurated this popular series in 2014 with “Turning into Dwelling: the Space between the Poet and the Poem,” a lecture on poetic community, poetic advocacy and poetic isolation. Since, audiences have continued to engage with provocative ideas and topics as diverse and insightful as the presenting poets, writers and scholars, themselves.

Lectures and master classes led by writers and professionals will provide poets with tools for navigating the literary field, and convene group learning opportunities for living in the practice of creating a justice-focused arts community.

We will tackle a breadth of equity issues in the arts, from racism to transphobia to ableism.

September 25, 2020
Virtual

When Poetry Meets Memoir:
A Master Class with Anastacia-Rene
November 14, 2020
Virtual
Community Workshops

Since 1999, nearly 1000 emerging poets have participated in Cave Canem’s Community Workshops, rare opportunities to work with accomplished poets for free or low-cost fees. Limited to an enrollment of 15, these ten-session workshops offer rigorous instruction, careful critique, and an introduction to the work of several poets—all within the welcoming environment of our Brooklyn, NY loft. All workshops conclude with a public reading where participants share their work.

Spring 2020

Writing Across Cultures
Marwa Helal
In this generative workshop, participants explored the poetics of placelessness; convergences of interior experience, and encounters with physical and dream landscapes.

Fall 2020

Best Practices
Safia Jama
Expect to write both within, and without, the workshop, sometimes favoring subject matter, sometimes experimenting with pure sense detail.

Ekphrasis and the Body
Omotara James
In combination with visual prompts, in-session writing, and peer-workshops, participants mapped the poetics of their identities and experiences with weekly discussions of contemporary poems that explore the body.

Dream/Memory/Ecstasy
Ladan Osman
Exploring poems, writings, media, and other artworks to deepen our understanding of impressions, recollections, and expressions to become familiar with personal imagery banks, to investigate commonalities, and to discuss divergences with higher levels of specificity to critically and aesthetically engage image systems in our poems.

Special Events

A Reading & Conversation with Ross Gay & Aimee Nezhukumatathil, moderated by Cathy Linh Che & Malcolm Tariq
September 30, 2020
Virtual

Black Futures, Black Poets with Yona Harvey and Cherene Sherrard
October 25, 2020
Virtual
PRIZE WINNERS
& PUBLICATIONS

2019 Toi Derricotte & Cornelius Eady Chapbook Prize
*My Name & Other Languages I Am Learning How to Speak*
by Marissa Davis
Jai-Alai Books (2020)
“A voice so varied and skilled one has to step back to see that the work is not that of a great, anthologized generation but of one stellar talent singing all the choir parts perfectly, wildly”
— Danez Smith

2019 Cave Canem Poetry Prize winner
*Semiotics*
by Chekwube Danladi
University of Georgia Press (2020)
“Semiotics is a fire raging through the terrain of the social, burning away the veils that mask power and hide hurt.”
— Evie Shockley

2019 Toi Derricotte & Cornelius Eady Chapbook Prize
*My Name & Other Languages I Am Learning How to Speak*
by Marissa Davis
Jai-Alai Books (2020)
“A voice so varied and skilled one has to step back to see that the work is not that of a great, anthologized generation but of one stellar talent singing all the choir parts perfectly, wildly”
— Danez Smith

2020 Toi Derricotte & Cornelius Eady Chapbook Prize
*To Cast a Dream*
by Wale Ayinla
Jai-Alai Books (2020)
“Serves as both eulogy and ode; to the water, to the land, and to the survival of voice. Song, Ocean, Skin, Lapis and Lift — these moments of liberation are the pulse of the poetry.”
— Mahogany L. Browne

2020 Cave Canem Northwestern University Press Poetry Prize
*Blessed are the Peacemakers*
by Brionne Janae
Northwestern University Press (2020)
“Drawing the monster of inheritance as it shapeshifts, these poems illustrate how our fathers’ sins can make fugitives of us.”
— Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon

2020 Cave Canem Poetry Prize
*Gumbo Ya Ya*
by Aurielle Marie
University of Pittsburgh Press (2020)
“These poems are spell weaving. They are bound to work you.”
— Douglas Kearney
In summer 2020, we successfully transitioned programming to virtual platforms beginning with presentations presented in partnership with City of Asylum, an organization we’ve partnered with since 2010 to present readings and craft talks with Cave Canem faculty to cap off the annual retreat. The 2020 summer events featured faculty that would have otherwise taught at the 2020 retreat with a program that included Evie Shockley and Major Jackson in July, followed by a reading in August with Robin Coste Lewis and Frank X Walker. Poets read new and selected works live from their homes, followed by a moderated discussion with Cave Canem fellows Rage Hezekiah and Quenton Baker. The July reading was streamed on The Show Must Go On(line) Pittsburgh channel. These programs marked the transition to online programming in the wake of COVID-19.

The onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the annual retreat by the University of Pittsburgh, which hosts the retreat each year.

In light of COVID-19’s impact on spring programming, two virtual events were presented in summer 2020 in partnership with City of Asylum, an organization we’ve partnered with since 2010 to present readings and craft talks with Cave Canem faculty to cap off the annual retreat. The summer events featured faculty that would have otherwise taught at the 2020 retreat with a program that included Evie Shockley and Major Jackson in July, followed by a reading in August with Robin Coste Lewis and Frank X Walker. Poets read new and selected works live from their homes, followed by a moderated discussion by Cave Canem fellow Rage Hezekiah and Quenton Baker. The July reading was streamed on The Show Must Go On(line) Pittsburgh channel. These programs marked the transition to online programming in the wake of COVID-19 which will continue into the fall season. With a cumulative audience of nearly 600 attendees across both events, the July reading enjoyed over 300 attendees and over 260 enjoyed the August reading. The digital space has allowed Cave Canem to engage and involve audiences across geographies, and pooled in larger audience participation.

Cave Canem and City of Asylum Presents:
Evie Shockley and Major Jackson
July 8, 2020
Virtual

Cave Canem and City of Asylum Presents:
Robin Coste Lewis and Frank X Walker
August 10, 2020
Virtual
We are grateful to the following individuals, institutional donors, and in-kind supporters for their generous financial contributions to Cave Canem between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020.

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Heather Quailes
Yvette Quayle
Alice Quinn
Hilary Rand
Anne Rashid
Eva Recinos
Steve & Michele Rempe
Sara Renberg
Laura Rension
Emily Rials
Alexa Richardson
Lisa Richter
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academy of American Poets</th>
<th>The Woo &amp; Wainger Charitable Fund (in honor of Lucy Wainger)</th>
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### FINANCIALS
#### FY 2020 (AUDITED)

#### Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2019 & 2018

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<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<td>Current Assets</td>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<td>Accounts receivable</td>
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<td>Grants &amp; contributions receivable</td>
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<td>Equipment, net of accumulated depreciation</td>
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<td>Total other assets</td>
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<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
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<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<td>Accounts payable &amp; accrued expenses</td>
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<td>Deferred income</td>
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<td>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
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#### 2020 Grants and Contributions

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<td>Individual</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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#### 2020 Expenses

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>580,344.00</strong></td>
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### FINANCIALS
#### FY 2020 (AUDITED)

#### Statements of Activities
December 31, 2020 & 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues</td>
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<td>Special events</td>
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<td>Total grants and contributions</td>
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<td>Program fees</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td>Net assets released from restriction</td>
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<td>Restricted contributions</td>
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<td>(Net assets released from restrictions)</td>
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<td>Total expenses</td>
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<td>Changes in net assets without donor restrictions</td>
<td>$72,565</td>
<td>$22,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted contributions</td>
<td>242,480</td>
<td>41,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Net assets released from restrictions)</td>
<td>(301,000)</td>
<td>(194,446)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in net assets with donor restrictions</td>
<td>111,480</td>
<td>(150,846)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets - Beginning of Year</td>
<td>488,377</td>
<td>672,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets - end of year</td>
<td>672,422</td>
<td>488,377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>