

HoCoPoLitSo

Howard County Poetry and Literature Society
10901 Little Patuxent Parkway • Horowitz Center 200 • Columbia, MD 21044

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tyehimba Jess to read at HoCoPoLitSo's Ninth Annual Blackbird Poetry Festival

Award-winning writer and slam poet Tyehimba Jess headlines the ninth annual **Blackbird Poetry Festival for HoCoPoLitSo**. With rare skill, Jess welds the immediacy of slam poetry with the craft of poetry on the page. The Blackbird Poetry Festival, April 27, 2017, on the campus of Howard Community College, is a day devoted to verse, with student workshops, book sales, readings and patrols by the poetry police. The Sunbird poetry reading, featuring Mr. Jess; as well as Washington, D.C., writer and literary activist E. Ethelbert Miller; local authors; and Howard Community College faculty and students, starts at 2:30 p.m. Mr. Jess will read from and discuss his recent work, *Olio*, as well as *leadbelly*, his 2004 book chosen for the National Poetry Series, during the Nightbird Poetry Reading, starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Smith Theatre of the Horowitz Center for Visual and Performing Arts. Nightbird admission tickets are \$15 each (students and seniors are \$10) available on-line at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2551545> or by sending a self-addressed envelope and check payable to HoCoPoLitSo, 10901 Little Patuxent Parkway, Horowitz Center 200, Columbia, MD 21044.

Tyehimba Jess, an associate professor of English at College of Staten Island, and a Cave Canem and NYU alumnus, received a 2004 literature fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a 2006 Whiting Fellowship. He is also a veteran of the 2000 and 2001 Green Mill Poetry Slam Team and was a finalist for the 2017 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award.

Jess is the author of two poetry collections: *leadbelly* (2004), a biography in poems of the legendary blues musician Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter, and *Olio* (2016), about African American performers from before the Civil War up to World War I. About *Olio*, 2011 National Book award winner Nikky Finney said: "Tyehimba Jess is inventive, prophetic, wondrous. He writes unflinchingly into the historical clefs of blackface, black sound, human sensibility." Jess' fiction and poetry have appeared in many journals and anthologies including *Angles of Ascent: A Norton Anthology of Contemporary African American Poetry*, *Beyond the Frontier: African American Poetry for the Twenty-First Century*, *Slam: The Art of Performance Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, and *Ploughshares*.

E. Ethelbert Miller, editor of poetry anthologies, author of two memoirs and numerous books of poetry, including his latest, *The Collected Poems of E. Ethelbert Miller* (2016), will read and lead a workshop.

For more than 40 years, HoCoPoLitSo has nurtured a love and respect for the diversity of contemporary literary arts in Howard County. The society sponsors literary readings and writers-in-residence outreach programs, produces *The Writing Life* (a writer-to-writer talk show), and partners with other cultural arts organizations to support the arts in Howard County, Maryland. For more information, visit www.hocopolitso.org.

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