



**BLACK LITERATURE FOR BLACK LIBERATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FIVE BLACK LITERARY ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES  
TO CHAMPION BLACK LITERARY TRADITIONS AND  
THE BLACK WRITERS WHO UPHOLD THEM**

*Getting Word: Black Literature for Black Liberation* Prepares  
for Another Successful Online Fundraiser for Juneteenth 2022

**Brooklyn, New York** – Five Black literary organizations—**Cave Canem Foundation** (Brooklyn, NY), **Furious Flower Poetry Center** (Harrisonburg, VA), **The Hurston/Wright Foundation** (Washington, DC), **Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora** (Normal, IL), and **The Watering Hole** (Columbia, SC)—have come together to announce their collective return to service and to reiterate the permanence of their mission. The collective, established in 2021, is known as *Getting Word: Black Literature for Black Liberation* (Getting Word) and their mission is both simple and urgent. In short, the mission is to spread the Black literary word as “a force against the diminishment of critical thinking” in the public sphere. Attached to this is a critical two-pronged call-to-action for the cultural arts and literary worlds: (1) recognize the fundamental role that Black literature plays in actualizing the fullness of our humanity, and (2) ensure the longevity of Black literary organizations (which are the underfunded but supportive engines that empower Black writers). Their online fundraiser will officially go live from Juneteenth 2022 (Sunday, June 19) to Independence Day 2022 (Monday, July 4). Their goal is to raise \$50,000. All details can be found on the collective’s new website at [www.GettingWord.org](http://www.GettingWord.org)

**ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE**

*Getting Word* began as a historic collaboration among five Black literary organizations: Cave Canem, Furious Flower Poetry Center, The Hurston/Wright Foundation, Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora, and The Watering Hole. Their collective work, spanning more than 100 years, has discovered, trained, and aided Black writers of all genres.

Nurtured by these organizations, award-winning member writers have consistently paved new paths in literature and helped transform the worldwide literary landscape. A quick glance at some of the collective's notable writers and award recipients reveals a broad cross-section of emerging and established writers, including (past and present) **Elizabeth Alexander, Houston A. Baker, Mahogany L. Browne, Octavia Butler, Wanda Coleman, Gloria Wade Gayles, Marita Golden, Essex Hemphill, Major Jackson, Gayl Jones, Yusef Komunyakaa, Claudia Rankine, Sonia Sanchez, Evie Shockley, Danez Smith, Tracy K. Smith**, and many others.

#### **ABOUT THE FUNDRAISER**

*Getting Word* launched its inaugural fundraising campaign in 2021 on Juneteenth and raised more than \$25,000 within two weeks. **Monifa Lemons** and **Candace G. Wiley**, co-founders of The Watering Hole, explained: "Rather than compete for support, it made more sense to join forces and share for the collective good of Black literary arts." [source: [LitHub.com](https://www.lithub.com)]. While the primary funders were from a small group of Black literature friends, the collective seeks support from a broader reading public. Additionally, the fundraiser will take place annually from Juneteenth to July Fourth, i.e., from Emancipation Day to Independence Day.

## **THE FIVE BLACK LITERARY ORGANIZATIONS**

**CAVE CANEM** | For 25 years Cave Canem has cultivated the artistic and professional growth of Black poets. Founded by **Toi Derricotte** and **Cornelius Eady** in 1996 to remedy the under-representation and isolation of Black poets in the literary landscape, Cave Canem Foundation is a home for the many voices of Black poetry and is committed to cultivating the artistic growth of Black poets.



### **CAVE CANEM**



**FURIOUS FLOWER POETRY CENTER** | Founded at James Madison University, Furious Flower is the nation's first academic center for Black poetry. The mission of the center is to ensure the visibility, inclusion, and critical consideration of Black poets in American letters, as well as in the whole range of educational curricula. Founder: **Dr. Joanne V. Gabbin**, a professor of English at James Madison University.



**HURSTON/WRIGHT FOUNDATION**  
A WORLD OF BLACK WRITERS

**HURSTON/WRIGHT FOUNDATION** | Co-founded by prolific author **Marita Golden**, Hurston/Wright has celebrated, nurtured, and showcased Black writers in all phases of their writing journey for over 30 years. Providing intensive writing workshop retreats, residencies, and craft talks, Hurston/Wright's mission is to mentor, recognize, and provide community for Black writers. Hurston/Wright also produces The Black Writer's Studio podcast and presents competitive awards, including the annual Hurston/Wright Legacy Book Awards.

**OBSIDIAN: LITERATURE & ARTS IN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA** | Celebrating over 47 years, Obsidian was founded by late poet **Alvin Auber** with help from poet **Sonia Sanchez**. It is an award-winning, peer-reviewed journal and publishing platform for critical and creative Black literature and arts. Published biannually in print and year-round online, Obsidian supports the contemporary poetry, fiction, drama/performance, visual and media art of Africans globally, and remains an independent beacon for critical-creative Black thought.



**OBSIDIAN**<sup>TM</sup>

Literature & Arts  
in the African Diaspora



**THE WATERING HOLE** | Founded in 2013, The Watering Hole builds Harlem Renaissance spaces for poets of color in the south. The Watering Hole invests in pursuing the craft of poetry. As a multiethnic, intergenerational, intersectional Tribe, we meet poets at every level from Slam to Ph.D. to beginner, from Gwendolyn Brooks scholar to Kendrick Lamar aficionado, from retiree to elementary school student.

Founders: **Candace Wiley** and **Monifa Lemons**.

## DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR *GETTING WORD*

- Website: [www.GettingWord.org](http://www.GettingWord.org)
- Email: [info@gettingword.org](mailto:info@gettingword.org)
- Instagram: [www.Instagram.com/GettingWordNow](https://www.Instagram.com/GettingWordNow)
- Twitter: [www.Twitter.com/GettingWordNow](https://www.Twitter.com/GettingWordNow)

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