



Center for Black Literature
presents the

17th National Black Writers Conference (NBWC2024)

Conference Theme:

All That We Carry: Where Do We Go From Here?

Wednesday, March 20 – Saturday, March 23, 2024

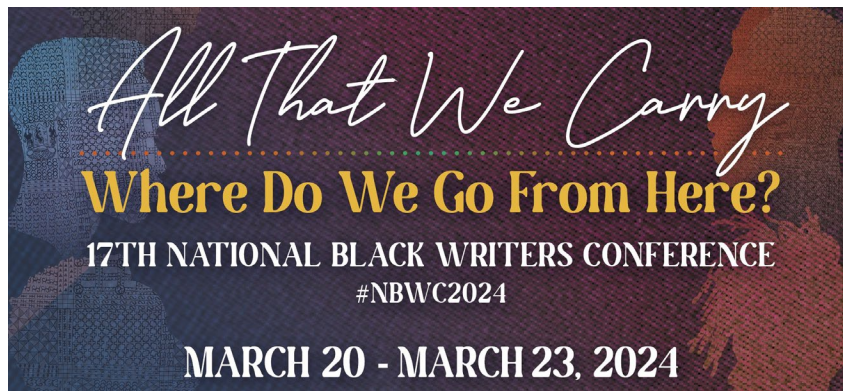
Medgar Evers College, CUNY | Brooklyn, NY

This Is a Hybrid Public Gathering (In-Person and Virtual)

Conference Founder: **John Oliver Killens** (Est. 1986)

CBL Founder and Executive Director: **Brenda M. Greene**

Tiya Miles' National Book Award-winning work, *All That She Carried, The Journey of Ashley's Sack, A Black Family Keepsake* (Penguin Random House, 2021), illustrates the value of tradition and history and portrays how we move forward when all around us is in disarray. Our writers and scholars have always caused us to uncover hidden truths and to critically assess and interrogate the books and information that we are exposed to, whether that be on the internet, in the media, at public forums, or in classrooms. The **National Black Writers Conference**, a program of the **Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY** (CBL), is a gathering of writers, scholars, literary professionals, and the general public where we will raise questions. We'll focus on the literature produced by Black writers throughout the African diaspora, explore the value of history and legacy in literature, examine the impact of environmental and systemic racism, assess the impact of social media and the internet, investigate the world of publishing, reflect on the need for peace and emotional healing, and host readings and talkshops on publishing and the craft of writing.



Pre-Conference Events

Tuesday, March 19

(program subject to change)

Film Presentation and Discussion

Sponsors: African Voices *Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival and Lecture Series (Reel Sisters)* and the Center's National Black Writers Conference

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

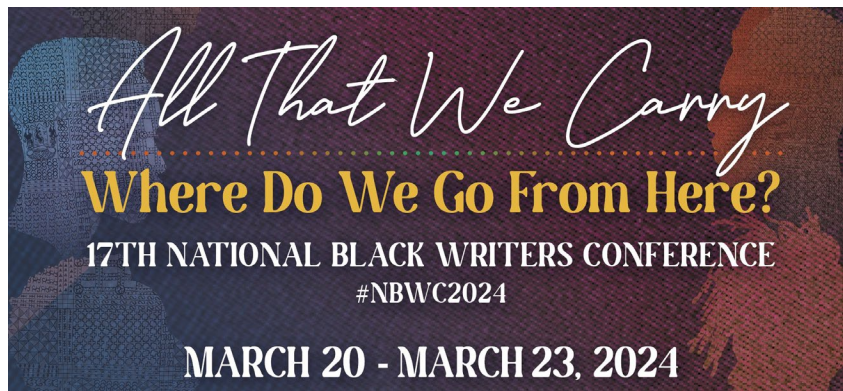
Celebrating its 27th year, Reel Sisters returns to the National Black Writers Conference to screen another series of thought-provoking films, followed by a moderated discussion and audience Q&A. The evening of short films represents the art of finding joy in our lives. From the games we played as young girls to the use of art to heal during challenging times, women hold space for themselves and their community in this selection of "girl power" films! Reel Sisters, a program of African Voices is the first Academy-qualifying film festival for narrative shorts devoted to women filmmakers. More details forthcoming.

NBWC2024 Poetry Slam

Sponsor: Office of Student Life at Medgar Evers College, CUNY

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Get ready for a night of unforgettable performance, good vibes, and endless inspiration at our open mic night!



DAY ONE: Wednesday, March 20

(program subject to change)

Opening Keynote: *All That We Carry, Where Do We Go From Here?*

Farah Jasmine Griffin in conversation with **Michael Eric Dyson**

Emcee: **Brenda M. Greene**

6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

*Drawing on the theme of the Conference, **All That We Carry: Where Do We Go From Here?**, Griffin will engage Michael Eric Dyson in a conversation on how we move forward in a public space characterized by environmental racism, social injustice, an attack on the Black body, domestic violence and terrorism, and an absence of empathy and peace.*

DAY TWO: Thursday, March 21

(program subject to change)

Re-Envisioning Our Lives through Literature (ROLL) Youth Program

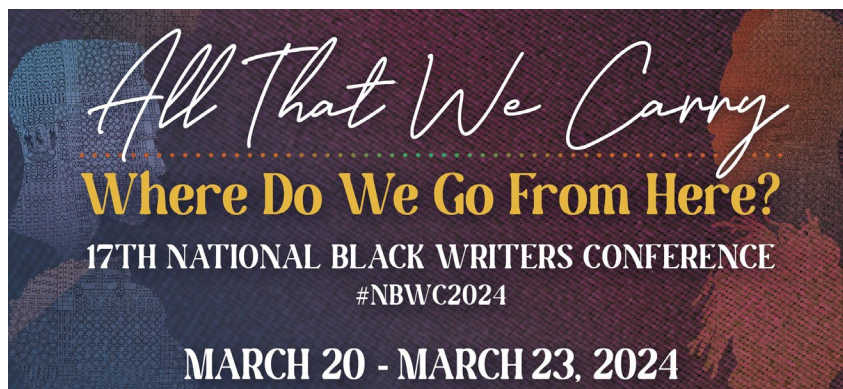
- 10:00 am to 12:00 pm - **Jennifer Baker** in conversation with **Jason Reynolds**
- 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm - **Renée Watson** in conversation with **Cheryl Hudson** and **Wade Hudson**

Virtual Scholarly Presentations on Conference Theme

Sponsor: The African American Studies Committee of the College Language Association

11:00 am - 3:00 pm | This is a virtual event (online only)

This virtual program is a presentation of scholarly papers submitted and accepted in response to a Call for Papers. Topics will examine how the NBWC2024 theme is connected to the Black experience or Black culture and how it is expressed or expanded in the works created by the honorees of the Conference.



DAY TWO: Thursday, March 21 (continued)

(program subject to change)

Dramatic Reading from the Dr. Edith Rock Writing Workshop for Elders

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

The program will share our writing elders' work that aligns with the Conference theme. As people of African descent who have lived through six or more decades, these writers are witnesses to the desecration of the natural world and the Black and Brown people who have lived in harmony with it. Their presentation will focus on the environment as they seek to answer the thematic question: Where Do We Go From Here?

NBWC2024 Poetry Café

Sponsor: Brooklyn Public Library

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Location: Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza

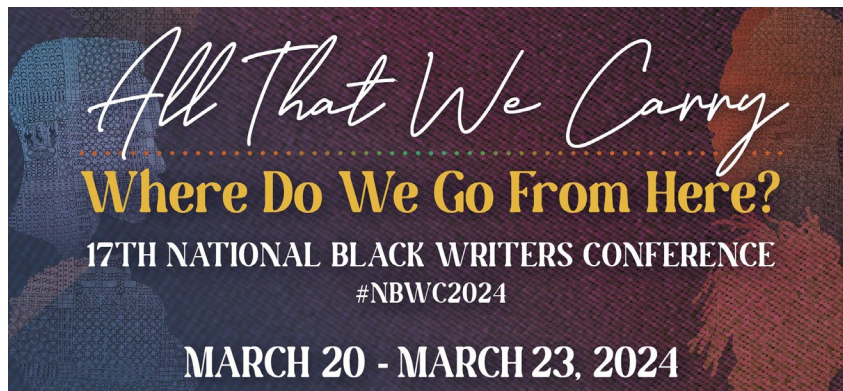
Poets from Medgar Evers respond to poetry from works by Cave Canem poets. The reading will present a "call and response" rendering of original poems from Cave Canem poets and the counter-response by Medgar Evers student poets.

Tiya Miles in conversation with Brenda M. Greene

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Emcee: **TBD**

Drawing on award-winning Miles's historical works, Greene will engage the National Book Award winner in a conversation on the process she uses in her writing, including the work All That She Carried. Greene will also inquire about the challenges of using fiction to recreate history.



DAY THREE: Friday, March 22

(program subject to change)

Technology, Social Media, and the Fight for Racial Justice

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

■ **Confirmed:** Marc Lamont Hill, Bettina Love, Wesley Lowery, and Emily Raboteau.

Moderator: **Jelani Cobb**

The speakers will focus on how technology, the visual media, a public pandemic, and environmental racism have shifted how we persist, teach, and talk about the impact of race and social justice in our educational institutions, communities, and public spaces.

The Healing Power of Literature

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

■ **Confirmed Speakers:** Patricia Spears Jones, Kalisha Buchanan, Marita Golden, and Kevin Powell.

Moderator: **Rachel Eliza Griffiths**

This conversation will focus on how literature fosters empathy, provides solace, and inspires resilience. Drawing from their work, writers will discuss how they have used their voices and the lens of the “Beloved Community” to explore how we navigate life’s challenges and fortify ourselves amid obstacles.

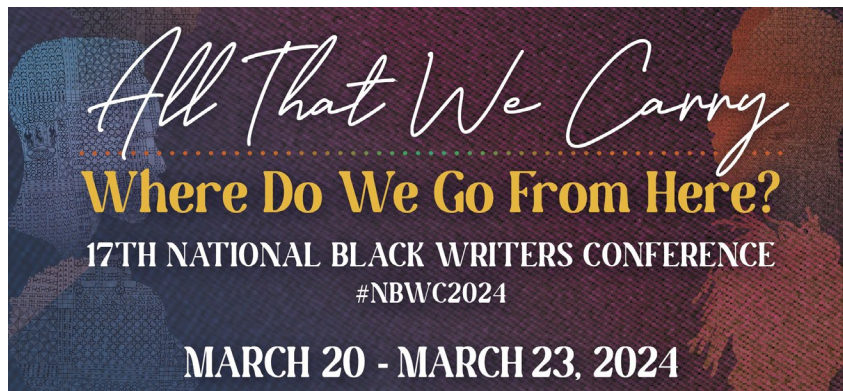
Black Writers’ Letters to America

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

■ **Confirmed:** Victoria Christopher Murray, Pamela Newkirk, Thabiti Lewis, and Khalil Gibran Muhammad.

Moderator: **Donna Hill**

Focus: How Black writers’ texts may be viewed as letters that chronicle the history of America from what Toni Morrison calls a Black gaze. These texts provide insight into the monumental changes that have impacted the history, achievements, and activism of Blacks in America.



DAY THREE: Friday, March 22 (continued)

(program subject to change)

SUMMIT KEYNOTE

A Conversation

with the 2024

National Black Writers Conference Honorees

Friday, March 22

6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Honorees

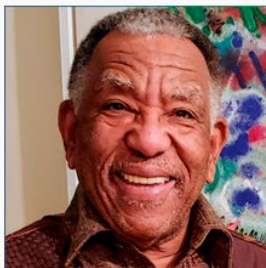
Paul Coates • Percival Everett
Peniel Joseph • Bernice McFadden

Moderator: **Gloria J. Browne-Marshall**

Emcee: **Wallace L. Ford, II**



Meet the 17th National Black Writers Conference (NBWC2024) Honorees! See them in person at the Summit Keynote and the Award Ceremony in March at Medgar Evers College! Contact CBL Communications for interviews. CBLpr@akilaworksongs.com



Paul Coates



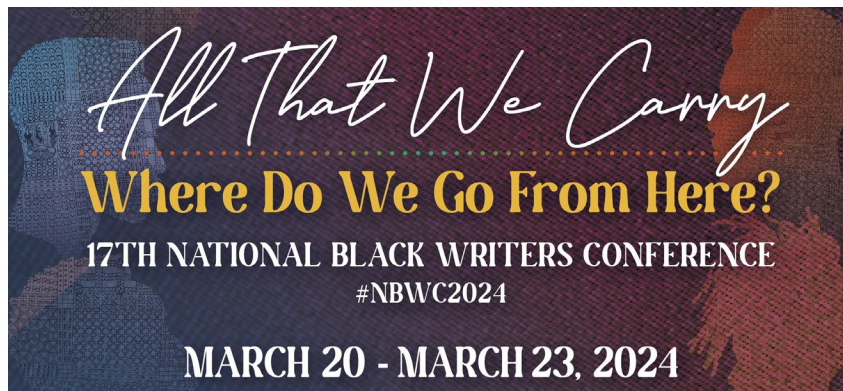
Percival Everett



Peniel E. Joseph



Bernice McFadden



DAY FOUR: Saturday, March 23

(program subject to change)

Wild Seeds Alumni Reunion

10:30 am to 12:30 pm

This event is reserved for alumni of CBL's Wild Seeds Retreat for Writers of Color.

Talkshops

11:00 am to 12:30 pm

- **Publishing.** Leader, **Tracy Sherrod**, VP; Executive Editor at Little, Brown
- **Book Proposals and Finding an Agent.** Leader, **Regina Brooks**, Founder and President of Serendipity Literary Agency
- **Poetry.** Leader, **Darrel Alejandro Holnes** | Afro-Panamanian American award-winning author of *Stepmotherland* and *Migrant Psalms*
- **Fiction.** Leader, **Kalisha Buchanon** | Celebrated author of *Upstate* and *Speaking of Summer*
- **Memoir.** Leader, **Patrick Dougher** | Award-winning artist; author of *If By Some Impossible Miracle: Coming of Age in Underground New York*

CBL's talkshops are like writing workshops in that they are designed to enhance one's literary projects and they provide strategies and working tools for writers and publishing professionals. Unlike a workshop, however, attendees are not required to bring or share writing or project samples. Talkshop leaders share their expertise and professional experience with attendees, and they help create a dynamic, highly engaged space that includes question-and-answer segments.

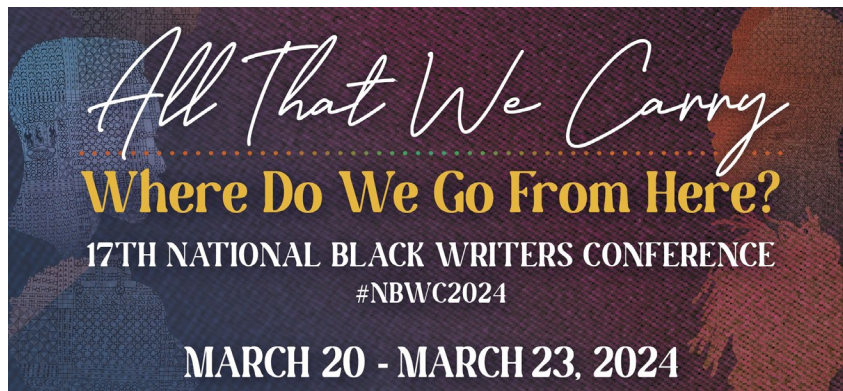
The Power of Historical Narratives

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

■ **Confirmed:** W.B. Garvey, Maryemma Graham, Ayana Mathis, and A.J. Verdelle.

Moderator: **Diane Richards**

The discussion amongst these writers will focus on how their work provides a way to expand narratives that have omitted important literary, historical, social, and political events and people who have shaped the experiences of Black, Brown, White, and Indigenous peoples in America.



DAY FOUR: Saturday, March 23 (continued)

(program subject to change)

Black Writers Crossing Boundaries and Borders

3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

■ **Confirmed:** Edwidge Danticat, Kwame Dawes, Stéphane Martelly, and Patrick Nganang.

Moderator: **Jasmine Claude Narcisse**

A focus on how African diasporic literature crosses boundaries and borders representing the complexity and intersections of race, culture, history, politics, gender, and the immigrant experience in the shaping and producing of diverse literary texts.

Myth and Reality: The World of Publishing for the Black Writer

5:00 pm to 6:30 pm

■ **Confirmed:** Regina Brooks, Karen Hunter, Christopher Jackson, Lisa Lucas, and Jamia Wilson.

Moderator: **Yahdon Israel**

Drawing from the premise of the need for a vibrant book culture and access to a wide range of books and diverse Black voices that contribute to the development of a critically conscious society, speakers on this roundtable will discuss the myths and realities of how Black writers are and can be supported by the mainstream publishing industry.

17th National Black Writers Conference Awards Ceremony 2024

Saturday, March 23

7:00 pm to 7:45 pm

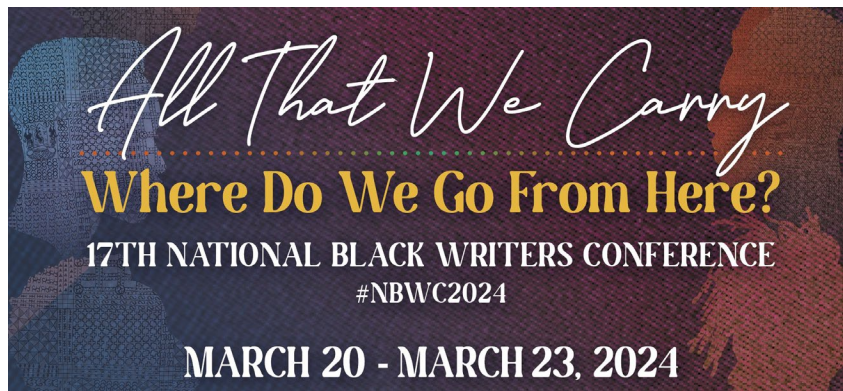
NBWC2024 Awardees

Paul Coates • Percival Everett
Peniel Joseph • Bernice McFadden

Emcee and Host: **Jacqueline Woodson**

Opening Remarks: **President Patricia Ramsey**, Medgar Evers College

Closing Remarks: **Brenda M. Greene**, Center for Black Literature



CONFIRMED SPEAKERS AT-A-GLANCE (partial list)

A.J. Verdelle	Marita Golden
Ayana Mathis	Maryemma Graham
Bernice McFadden	Michael Eric Dyson
Bettina Love	Pamela Newkirk
Brenda M. Greene	Patricia Spears Jones
Cheryl Hudson	Patricia Ramey
Christopher Jackson	Patrick Dougher
Darrel Alejandro Holnes	Patrick Nganang
Diane Richards	Paul Coates
Donna Hill	Peniel E. Joseph
Edwidge Danticat	Percival Everett
Emily Raboteau	Rachel Eliza Griffiths
Farah Jasmine Griffin	Regina Brooks
Gloria Browne Marshall	Renée Watson
Jacqueline Woodson	Stéphane Martelly
Jamia Wilson	Thabiti Lewis
Jasmine Claude Narcisse	Tiya Miles
Jason Reynolds	Tracy Sherrod
Jelani Cobb	Victoria Christopher Murray
Jennifer Baker	Wade Hudson
Kalisha Buchanan	Wallace L. Ford II
Karen Hunter	W.B. Garvey
Kevin Powell	Wesley Lowery
Khalil Gibran Muhammad	Yahdon Israel
Kwame Dawes	
Lisa Lucas	
Marc Lamont Hill	



IMPORTANT PROGRAM NOTES

1. The NBWC2024 program is subject to change.
2. Please check the CBL website for regular updates and room locations at the college.
3. A Q&A session with the audience follows all roundtables.
4. Authors will be available for book signings after their discussion.

COMMUNICATIONS and MARKETING CONTACTS

■ Public and Media Relations + Marketing Partnerships

- Publicity and Press: April R. Silver (Rosemary Arthur, Executive Assistant)
- Marketing Partnerships: Drake R. Holliday
- Phone and Email: (718) 756-8501 and CBLpr@akilaworksongs.com
- Download Press Release: <https://akila.ws/pressroom>

■ CBL's Digital Directory

- How To Register: <https://bit.ly/cbleventbrite>
- Website: www.centerforblackliterature.org
- CBL Facebook: [@CenterForBlackLiterature](https://www.facebook.com/CenterForBlackLiterature)
- NBWC Facebook: [@NationalBlackWritersConference](https://www.facebook.com/NationalBlackWritersConference)
- Twitter: [@Center4BlackLit](https://twitter.com/Center4BlackLit)
- Instagram: [@Center4BlackLit](https://www.instagram.com/Center4BlackLit)
- YouTube: [@CenterForBlackLiteratureMedgarEversCollege](https://www.youtube.com/CenterForBlackLiteratureMedgarEversCollege)

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■ Registration Inquiries info@centerforblackliterature.org