



## Jimmy Carter Library & Museum News Release

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### Pulitzer Prize Winning Poet To Speak at Carter Presidential Library

*Yusef Komunyakaa to be joined by Emory University Poet Natasha Trethewey for Public Reading*

ATLANTA, GA.- Pulitzer Prize winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa comes to the Carter Presidential Library Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> for a special evening of poetry. The 8 p.m. poetry reading will also feature award winning Emory University poet Natasha Trethewey.

Yusef Komunyakaa won the Pulitzer Prize and the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award for “**Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems 1977-1989.**” Among his other books of poetry are “**Thieves of Paradise; Talking Dirty to the Gods;** and **Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems, 1975-1999.**”

His experiences growing up in Louisiana, the eldest of five children, are at the heart of many of his poems. **Magic City** details his childhood and draws on images of a Venus fly-trap plant, a love-torn and abusive father, a neighborhood street prophet, the trials of an immigrant grandfather and the rivalry of his siblings.

Familial relationships, living in a rural Southern community and the blues and jazz world in nearby New Orleans provide a colorful and engaging backdrop for these works. A Vietnam veteran, Komunyakaa recorded many of his war experiences in verse in the volumes **Toys in a Field** and **Dien Cai Dau.**

Critics have compared Komunyakaa to Langston Hughes, Ezra Pound and T.S. Elliott.

Joining Komunyakaa on the Carter Library stage will be Natasha Trethewey. The Emory University poet and English professor has published two books of poetry, **Bellocq’s Ophelia** (2002) and **Domestic Work** (2000), which was awarded the Cave Canem Poetry Prize for the best first book by an African American poet.

Trethewey’s poetry also has appeared in **Agni, The American Poetry Review, The Best American Poetry 2000, The Massachusetts Review** and **The Southern Review** among others magazines and anthologies.

Like many of Komunyakaa’s works, Trethewey set her book **Bellocq’s Ophelia** in Louisiana. Using free verse poems written as letters and diary entries, Trethewey tells the story of a New Orleans prostitute named Ophelia and the life she lives.

This will be an evening of stories brought to life with amazing word images. You won’t soon forget it.