

Media Contacts:

Camille Rankine, Program/Communications Coordinator
Cave Canem Foundation: 212.941.5720; camillerankine@ccpoets.org



Jeffrey Shotts, Senior Editor, Graywolf Press: 651.641.0077; shotts@graywolfpress.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GARY JACKSON WINS 2009 CAVE CANEM POETRY PRIZE

Graywolf Press to Publish Missing you, Metropolis

NEW YORK, NY (September 3, 2009) — Cave Canem Foundation, Inc., North America’s premier “home for black poetry,” is pleased to announce that **Gary Jackson** has received the 2009 **Cave Canem Poetry Prize** for his manuscript, *Missing you, Metropolis*, selected by **Yusef Komunyakaa**. Graywolf Press will publish the collection in fall 2010. Additionally, Mr. Jackson will receive \$1,000 and a feature reading. Honorable Mentions were given to **Lillian-Yvonne Bertram** and **Jarita Davis** for their manuscripts, *Inside the Face Inside the Heart Inside* and *As If Returning Home*, respectively.

Yusef Komunyakaa writes, “Gary Jackson’s *Missing you, Metropolis* embodies and underscores a voice uniquely shaped and tuned for the 21st century. Playful, jaunty and highly serious...the collection is gauged by a sophisticated heart. Pathos breathes within and slightly underneath the visual comedy, and this quality is the true genius of *Missing you, Metropolis*.”

Established in 1999 with Rita Dove’s selection of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Natasha Trethewey’s *Domestic Work* (Graywolf Press, 2000), the Cave Canem Poetry Prize is an annual first-book award dedicated to the discovery of exceptional manuscripts by African American poets. **Elizabeth Alexander**, 2009 Inaugural Poet, will judge the 2010 Cave Canem Poetry Prize competition. Along with publication by The University of Georgia Press, the winner will receive \$1,000, 15 copies of the published book and a feature reading. For more information, visit www.cavecanempoets.org.

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CAVE CANEM FOUNDATION, INC. * 584 Broadway, Suite 508, New York, NY 10012*
www.cavecanempoets.org / 212.941.5720

POETS

Born & raised in Topeka, Kansas, **Gary Jackson** received his MFA in Poetry from the University of New Mexico in 2008. His poems have appeared in *Inscape*, *Magma*, *The Literary Bohemian* and local chapbooks. He currently teaches English as a Second Language in Seoul, South Korea.

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram is a graduate of the Creative Writing Program at Carnegie Mellon University and received her MFA in Poetry from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. A Cave Canem fellow, she has attended workshops at Callaloo and The Port Townsend Writers' Conference, and was awarded a work study scholarship to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. Her work has appeared in such journals as *Mid-American Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Callaloo* and *Cream City Review*. She was a finalist for the Mid-American Review James Writing Poetry Award (2009) and the New Issues Press Poetry Prize (2009), and was awarded the Gaius Charles Bolin Fellowship at Williams College (2009-2011). She lives in Buffalo, New York.

Jarita Davis is a poet and fiction writer who earned a BA in classics from Brown University and an MFA and PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette. She was the Writer in Residence at the Nantucket Historical Association and has received fellowships from the Mellon Mayes program, Cave Canem and Hedgebrook. She was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Travel Research Grant, a Neiheisel Phi Beta Kappa Award, and a grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts. Her work has appeared in *Southwestern Review*, *Historic Nantucket*, *Crab Orchard Review* and *Plainsongs*, and is forthcoming in *Tuesday; An Art Project*.

JUDGE

Yusef Komunyakaa is the critically acclaimed author of 14 books of poetry, including *Taboo: The Wishbone Trilogy, Part 1; Copacetic; Dien Cai Dau; Neon Vernacular: New & Selected Poems 1977-1989*, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize; *Talking Dirty to the Gods*; and *Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems*. His latest book of poems, *Warhorses*, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2008. His prose is collected in *Blues Notes: Essays, Interviews & Commentaries* (University of Michigan Press, 2000), and he co-edited *The Jazz Poetry Anthology* (with J. A. Sascha Feinstein, 1991). He also co-translated *The Insomnia of Fire*, by Nguyen Quang Thieu (with Martha Collins), and has written

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dramatic works, including *Gilgamesh: A Verse Play* (Wesleyan University Press, 2006). In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, his honors include the 2004 Shelley Memorial Award, the 2001 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Hanes Poetry Prize and the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. He is Professor and Distinguished Senior Poet at New York University.

Founded in 1996 by poets **Toi Derricotte** and **Cornelius Eady** to remedy the under-representation of African American poets in writing workshops and MFA programs, **Cave Canem** is a home for the many voices of African American poetry and is committed to cultivating the artistic and professional growth of African American poets. Cave Canem has grown from an initial gathering of 26 poets to become an influential movement with a renowned faculty and a high-achieving fellowship of 289. Its programs include an annual writing retreat, first and second book prizes, Legacy Conversations, Poets on Craft talks, workshops, publications and national readings. To date, the organization has published *Gathering Ground: A Reader Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade* (University of Michigan Press, 2006) and *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South* (The University of Georgia Press, 2007). For more information, go to cavecanempoets.org.

Founded by Scott Walker in 1974, today, **Graywolf Press**, St. Paul, Minnesota, is considered one of the nation's leading nonprofit publishers. The press inaugurated its list with *Instructions to the Double*, by Tess Gallagher, and has since expanded to publish novels, short stories, memoirs, essays and poetry; and has discovered and/or promoted such writers as Elizabeth Alexander, Charles Baxter, Sven Birkerts, Linda Gregg, Eamon Grennan, Tony Hoagland, Jane Kenyon, William Kittredge, Carl Phillips, William Stafford, David Treuer and Brenda Ueland. A commitment to quality and a willingness to embrace or invent new models has kept Graywolf at the forefront of the small press movement.

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