



For Immediate Release

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**Poetry Foundation Presents**  
***Poetry Off the Shelf with Kevin Young***  
***Poetry reading and discussion***

CHICAGO —The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, announces a reading and discussion with poet and essayist Kevin Young.

**What:** *Poetry Off the Shelf with Kevin Young*  
**When:** Tuesday, January 16, 6:00pm  
**Where:** The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago

**Admission is free, but seating is limited and reservations are required.**  
**For reservations call (312) 787-7070.**

*Poetry Off the Shelf* is a landmark Chicago reading and conversation series that regularly makes contributors to *Poetry* magazine available to discuss essential themes in their work and answer audience questions.

Jointly sponsored by the Poetry Foundation, Young Chicago Authors, and The Newberry Library, Kevin Young reads from and talks about his recently released book of poetry, *For the Confederate Dead*. In this passionate new volume, Young takes up a range of African American griefs and passages. He opens with the beautiful “Elegy for Miss Brooks,” invoking Gwendolyn Brooks; gives us a saucy ballad of Jim Crow; a poem about Lionel Hampton’s last concert in Paris; an “African Elegy,” which addresses the tragic loss of a close friend in conjunction with the first anniversary of 9/11; and a series entitled “Americana,” in which we encounter a clutch of mythical southern towns, such as East Jesus (“The South knows ruin & likes it / thataway—the barns becoming / earth again, leaning in—”) and West Hell (“Sin, thy name is this / wait—this place— / a long ways from Here / to There”).

*For the Confederate Dead* finds Young, more than ever before, in a poetic space that is at once

public and personal. In the marvelous “Guernica,” Young’s account of a journey through Spain blends with the news of an American lynching, prompting him to ask, “Precious South, / must I save you, / or myself?” In this surprising book, the poet manages to do a bit of both, embracing the contradictions of our “Confederate” legacy and the troubled nation where that legacy still lingers.

One of the leading poets of his generation, Kevin Young is the author of four previous collections of poetry and the editor of the Library of America’s *John Berryman: Selected Poems*, Everyman’s Library Pocket Poets anthologies *Blues Poems* and *Jazz Poems*, and *Giant Steps: The New Generation of African American Writers*. His book *Jelly Roll* won the Paterson Poetry Prize and was a finalist for the National Book Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. The recent recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship and an NEA fellowship, Young is currently the Atticus Haygood Professor of English and Creative Writing and curator of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

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### **Upcoming Poetry Foundation Events in Chicago:**

#### **Poetry Off the Shelf with Kim Addonizio**

**Thursday, February 8, 7:00pm**

**The HotHouse, 31 East Balbo**

#### **Poetry Off the Shelf with Martín Espada**

**Thursday, March 15, 6:00pm**

**The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street**

For further details, and to sign up to receive email notices of Poetry Foundation events, please visit [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)

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### **About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit [www.PoetryFoundation.org](http://www.PoetryFoundation.org).