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For Immediate Release

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**Pushcart Prize-Winning Poet Saeed Jones Reads
with Six Seniors in Princeton's Creative Writing Program**
*Writer is final guest in series organized by Princeton students in collaboration
with Labyrinth Books*



Photo caption: Award-winning poet Saeed Jones

Photo credit: Jon Premosch

What/Who: Reading by poet Saeed Jones and six seniors in Princeton's Program in Creative Writing, part of the C. K. Williams Reading Series

When: Friday, April 28 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Labyrinth Books at 122 Nassau Street

Free and open to the public

(Princeton, NJ) Poet Saeed Jones and six seniors in the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in

Creative Writing at Princeton University will read from their work on Friday, April 28 at Labyrinth Books. The reading is part of the C. K. Williams Reading Series, which showcases senior thesis students of the Program in Creative Writing alongside established writers as special guests. Featuring student writers Rebecca Bedell, Lizzie Buehler, Will Lathrop, Shannon Osaka, Emily Redfield, and Julia Wang, the reading begins at 6:00 p.m. at Labyrinth Books, located at 122 Nassau Street. The event is free and open to the public.

Saeed Jones was born in Memphis, Tennessee and raised in Lewisville, Texas. His poems engage themes of intimacy, race, and power, often incorporating elements of mythology. In a 2014 interview for PEN America, Jones stated, “I’m obsessed with manhood as a brutal and artful performance. My mind always finds its way back to the crossroad where sex, race, and power collide. Journeys, transformation as well as dashed attempts to transform, fascinate me as well.” Further, in a 2015 essay written for the *New York Times*, Jones states, “I think often when we talk about brutality and violence ... we often hear from the survivors, but sometimes I think we also need to hear the horror itself.”

Jones’s debut collection, *Prelude to Bruise* (2014), was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and received a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*, which described the book as “a fever dream, something akin to magic.” The reviewer continues, “A dark night of the soul presented as the finest of evening gowns, these poems pulse with an elemental sensuality that recalls Rimbaud's *Venus Anadyomene* and the best of Southern Gothic writing. Using a personal symbology of femininity, violence, and the history of black America, Jones weaves a coming-of-age tale that is both terrible and revelatory.”

Jones earned his bachelors at Western Kentucky University, where he won the Jim Wayne Miller Award for Poetry, and an M.F.A. at Rutgers University-Newark. His chapbook, *When the Only Light is Fire*, was published in 2011 by Sibling Rivalry Press. Jones has received a Pushcart Prize and has also been awarded fellowships from Cave Canem and Queer/Art/Mentorship. He is the executive editor in culture for *BuzzFeed* and lives in New York City.

The six seniors, who are pursuing a certificate in Creative Writing in addition to their major areas of study, will read from their senior thesis projects. Each is currently working on a novel, a screenplay, translations, or a collection of poems or short stories as a part of a creative thesis for their certificate. Thesis students in the Program in Creative Writing work closely with a member of the faculty, which includes Jeffrey Eugenides, Jhumpa Lahiri, Paul Muldoon, Kirstin Valdez Quade, James Richardson, Tracy K. Smith, Susan Wheeler, Edmund White, and a number of distinguished lecturers.

The series, hosted by the seniors in the program, is intended to present a public showcase for the work of the thesis students and provide the senior class the opportunity to read with and learn from established writers they admire. The series is named in honor of Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-winning poet C. K. Williams, who served on Princeton's creative writing faculty for twenty years.

The Program in Creative Writing also presents the Althea Ward Clark W'21 Reading Series on Wednesdays at the Berlind Theatre at McCarter Theatre Center. Guests during the 2016-2017 series included Jenny Johnson, Joy Williams, NoViolet Bulawayo, Valeria Luiselli, Stephen King, Eileen Myles, Paul Beatty, Marilyn Chin, Douglas Kearney, Kirstin Valdez Quade, John Ashbery, and Jim Jarmusch.

To learn more about the reading, the Program in Creative Writing and the more than 100 public events presented each year by Lewis Center for the Arts, visit arts.princeton.edu.

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