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Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy K. Smith announced as 2024 Book One Lecturer



GREAT BARRINGTON, MA— Text here, 12/15 Calibri with 9pt after Pulitzer Prize winner and former U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith's poetry collection *Wade in the Water* has been announced as the 2024 Book One selection.

The lecture and Q&A will be held on Thursday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the McConnell Theater on the Simon's Rock campus. The event is open to the public and free of charge, and will be available via livestream.

Published in 2018, *Wade in the Water* will be read by incoming students when they arrive at Simon's Rock.

Beginning in 2005, incoming students have participated in Book One as a common starting point for their college careers. Each year, a book is selected based on excellence and suitability for promoting interdisciplinary

conversations about the intersection of cultures. The book, lecture, and supporting materials are supplied in the hopes that it inspires discussion and exploration in students during the preliminary weeks of their First-Year Seminar.

Smith, appointed the 22nd U.S. Poet Laureate from 2017 to 2019, has written five books of poetry, one memoir titled *Ordinary Light*, and co-translated (with Changtai Bi) a *My Name Will Grow Wide like a Tree: Selected Poems of Yi Lei*, a collection of poetry by Yi Lei; *Wade in the Water* is her fourth collection, with the title poem harboring a melancholic tone infused with a persistent love burdened with the aches of history.

During her time as Poet Laureate, Smith spearheaded American Conversations: Celebrating Poetry in Rural Communities with the Library of Congress - which chronicled her journeys of poetic exploration in New Mexico, Kentucky, South Carolina, Alaska, South Dakota, Maine, and Louisiana through audio recordings, interviews, photography, poetry commentary, and reflections, created the American PublicMedia podcast *The Slowdown*, and edited the anthology *American Journal: Fifty Poems for Our Time*.

She is a Professor of English and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, and a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at Harvard Radcliffe Institute.

You can join the free livestream for this event here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82975129264>

Book One Program

Inaugurated in 2005, the Book One program asks all members of the incoming class to read the first book of their college careers over the summer. Each year, a book is selected based on excellence and suitability for promoting interdisciplinary conversations about the intersection of cultures. The fall semester kicks off with a lively lecture by the author, with past writers including Alexander Chee, Gregory Pardlo, Don Mee Choi, and Simon's Rock alums Veronica Chambers '87, Prageeta Sharma '89, and Molly McCully Brown '08.

About Simon's Rock

[Bard College at Simon's Rock](#) is the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. Simon's Rock offers a challenging program in the liberal arts and sciences, taught exclusively in small seminars by supportive, highly trained faculty, who are leading scholars in their fields. The College grants degrees in more than 35 majors. The Princeton Review's *Best 380 Colleges* rates academics at Simon's Rock higher than Harvard and Princeton.

[Bard Academy at Simon's Rock](#) is the nation's first two-year boarding and day program designed to prepare 9th and 10th graders to start college early. A student entering Bard Academy as a high school freshman will earn an Associate of Arts degree from Bard College at Simon's Rock after only four years and a Bachelor of Arts degree after only six years. The Academy curriculum is designed and taught by students' future college professors who are leading scholars in their fields.

[The Bard Queer Leadership Project](#) (BQLP) is a revolutionary, new Bachelor of Arts degree program designed for, and by, LGBTQIA+ college students to elevate LGBTQIA+ students and college graduates into leadership roles in school and across the workforce while serving as a space for actualizing educational practices designed for students to thrive. The centerpiece of BQLP is a four year dual major B.A. degree combining Queer Leadership with a second academic field.

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