

2023 Diaspora Café Poetry Retreat

Saturday April 15th, 2023

10:45am – 11:15am: Participant Arrival and Check-In, MLK Library, 4th floor

11:15pm – 12:00pm: Welcome Reception: Overview of the day, Introductions – **Blessing Our Boats**, Drum Circle, with Michael Friend, Soul in Motion

12:00pm – 12:45pm: Lunch, in the room, or weather permitting in the roof area

12:45pm – 2:00pm: Workshop, **Honoring the Ancestors**, Maritza Rivera

2:00pm – 2:15pm: Break

2:15pm – 2:45pm: Participant Reading

2:45pm – 3:15pm: Keynote Address, **The Ancestors in the Mirror**, E. Ethelbert Miller

3:15pm – 3:30pm: Q&A

3:30pm – 4:00pm: Closing circle, Evaluations, Group Photos

4:00pm – 4:15pm: Departure

Workshop Description: Honoring the Ancestors

Many cultures believe that the Ancestors watch over us and help us achieve our purpose in life. In this workshop we will utilize culture, ancestral memory, family traditions, and secrets, as well as customs, language and heritage, to honor those who came before us. Who we are and what we write in this workshop is intended to thank and honor the Ancestors for their gifts to us and share them with others.

Bios

Michael Friend: is the artistic director and founder of Soul in Motion Players, Inc. In 1984, Michael and his sister Khandi started performing as the Soul in Motion Players. Their debut performance was at Michael's alma mater, Howard University during Black History Month. Michael wrote and debuted his first theatrical production, *We Are Africa* in 1991. His other works include *Henrietta Marie*, *Malcolm*, *What If* and *Ile Ife – House of Love*. In 2011, as

director of Soul in Motion, Michael won the prestigious Montgomery County Executive's Community Award for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities. In 2014 he was the recipient of the Empower Magazine Player Award and in March 2016, Joe's Movement Emporium honored Michael as a Mighty Joe with the Creative Visionary Award. Most recently Michael was the recipient of a 2023 Heritage Award and Creativity Award from the Maryland State Arts Council.

E. Ethelbert Miller: is a literary activist and author of two memoirs and numerous poetry collections. He hosts the WPFW-FM radio show On the Margin and hosts and produces The Scholars on UDC-TV which received a 2020 Telly Award. He has received a congressional award from Congressman Jamie Raskin in recognition of his literary activism. His most recent publication in 2022 is: How I Found Love Behind the Catcher's Mask.

<https://blog.pmpress.org/2023/02/11/interview-grammy-game-changers-e-ethelbert-miller/>

Jeffrey Banks: is poetically known as "Big Homey." His credits include: *ESSENCE Magazine*, Sirius/XM Satellite Radio, Radio-One Inc., the CBS Early Show, *BLACK ENTERPRISE Magazine*, performing nationwide, international broadcasts, multiple grant awards and publications through DC Public Libraries, the National Association for Poetry Therapy, Paris Lit Up, and Day Eight.

Maritza Rivera: is a Puerto Rican poet and Army veteran who has lived in Rockville, MD since 1994. Maritza began hosting the annual Mariposa Poetry Retreat in 2021 and is the publisher of Casa Mariposa Press. She is the creator of a poetry form called Blackjack, and the author of *About You; A Mother's War*, written during her son's two tours in Iraq; *Baker's Dozen; Twenty-One: Blackjack Poems*. Her work appears in literary magazines, anthologies, online publications and in the public arts project, *Meet Me at the Triangle* in Wheaton, MD.

Day Eight: founded by artist/arts writer Robert Bettmann, was create to contribute to the healing of the world through the arts. Day Eight's mission is to empower individuals and communities to participate in the arts through the production, publication, and promotion of creative projects. Day Eight's programming includes a literary magazine, Bourgeon, publication of 4-6 poetry books a year, education programming for children and youth, and progams supporting arts journalism. To learn more about Day Eight, visit DayEight.org.
