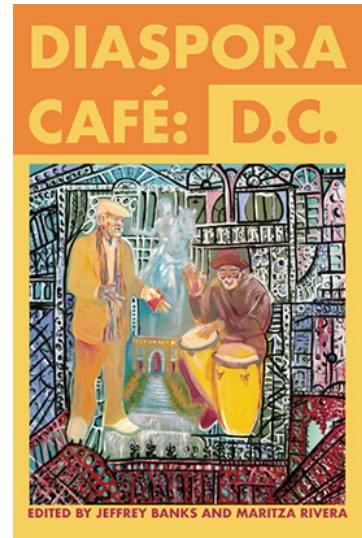


2023 Diaspora Café Poetry Retreat

Saturday April 15th, 2023

About

Directed by Maritza Rivera and Jeffrey Banks, the Diaspora Café Retreat is produced to support poetic expression by D.C. AfroLatinx writers. Select writing by retreat participants will be printed in a special section of a forthcoming print edition of the literary magazine, *Bourgeon*. The retreat was inspired by the book *Diaspora Café, D.C.*, released August, 2022, by Day Eight, and edited by the directors. *Diaspora Café, D.C.* is a poetry anthology by AfroLatinx writers, and a collective investigation of survival by writers within a system that deprioritizes their existence. While some poems consider identity and relationships, and others are love poems to family and lovers, all are united by a thread of resistance against invisibility. Danyeli Rodriguez Del Orbe described the book, “An honest and tender portrayal of the complexities we experience while thriving and surviving within the African diaspora.”



The Diaspora Café retreat is made possible by support from Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser’s Mayors Office of Latino Affairs, individual donors to Day Eight, and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Retreat Schedule

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

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

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

12:45pm – 1:15pm: Workshop, **My Story Is**, Jeffrey Banks

1:15pm – 2:15pm: Workshop, **Honoring the Ancestors**, Maritza Rivera

2:15pm – 2:45pm: Participant Reading

2:45pm – 3:15pm: Keynote Address, **Identity and The Writing Life** by E. Ethelbert Miller

3:15pm – 3:30pm: Q&A

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

Retreat Faculty and Organizers

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 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* and he was nominated for a 2022 Grammy award for his spoken word album, *Black Men Are Precious*.

<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*; and, *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.

Michael Friend: is the artistic director and founder of Soul in Motion Players, Inc. The company's debut performance, in 1984, included his sister Khandi and 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. Other works include *Henrietta Marie*, *Malcolm*, *What If* and *Ile Ife – House of Love*. He received the Montgomery County Executive's Community Award for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities in 2011, Empower Magazine's Player Award in 2014, Joe's Movement Emporium's Creative Visionary Award in 2016, and Heritage and Creativity Award from the Maryland State Arts Council in 2023.

Day Eight: founded by Robert Bettmann, was created 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 the literary magazine *Bourgeon*, publication of 4-6 poetry books a year, education programming for children and youth, and programs supporting arts journalism. To learn more about Day Eight, visit DayEight.org.

The Mariposa Poetry Retreat: founded by Maritza Rivera, is intended to build community among poets and writers within and beyond borders and provide the time and space to focus on

new work in a serene and inspiring setting away from the pressures and distractions of daily life. The retreat promotes a safe, instructive and inclusive environment that addresses the creative challenges faced by writers of all genres.

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.