



Town of Huntington

... News Release From The Town of Huntington ...

Public Information Office ♦ Supervisor's Office ♦ 100 Main Street ♦ Huntington, NY 11743-6991

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Contact: Lauren Lembo
(631) 351-3349
llembo@huntingtonny.gov

Board to Recognize 2018 Poetry for the HART Winners

Winning teens to join poets Gladys Henderson, Michelle Whittaker, Barbara Reiher-Meyers, and Russell Green in April 23 reading at Walt Whitman Birthplace

On Monday, April 23, the Huntington Town Board will recognize teen poets from the community selected for participation in the Town's *Poetry for the HART* Public Art Initiative. The event will begin at 7 p.m. at the Walt Whitman Birthplace (246 Old Walt Whitman Rd., Huntington Station).

The winning teen poets will receive certificates in an award ceremony with members of the Huntington Town Board. Immediately following conclusion of the award ceremony there will be a poetry reading led by poets **Gladys Henderson** and **Michelle Whittaker** – and including selections from poets and Selection Panel members **Barbara Reiher-Meyers** and **Russell Green** – at which each of the teen poets selected for the program will read their winning poems. A brief reception will follow. The award ceremony, reading, and reception are free and open to the public.

Gladys Henderson's poems are widely published and have been featured on PBS Channel 21 in their production, *Shoreline Sonata*. Her work has appeared in several journals and anthologies including: *A Taste of Poetry*, *Avocet*, *Block Island Poetry Project*, *For Loving Precious Beast*, *Great Neck Plaza Public Poetry Project*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Long Island Sounds*, *Long Island Quarterly*, *Mason's Road*, *Oberon*, *Paumanok: Interwoven*, *Poetry Bay*, *Songs of Seasoned Women*, *String Poetry Journal*, *Suffolk County Poetry Review*, *The Light of City and Sea*, *Towards Forgiveness*, *Whispers and Shouts*, *Xanadu*, as well as many other publications. Nationally she was a finalist for the Paumanok Poetry Prize 2006, has received recognition in the *Writer's Digest Poetry Competitions* 2008, 2009, & 2012. She was named the Walt Whitman Birthplace Poet of the Year in 2010, and recently was chosen as the Poet Laureate of Suffolk County 2017-2019. Finishing Line Press published her chapbook *Eclipse of Heaven* in 2009.

Michelle Whittaker is a musician and poet. Her poems have been published in the *New York Times Magazine*, *New Yorker*, *Narrative*, *Vinyl Poetry*, *Long Island Quarterly*, and other publications. She was awarded a 2017 New York State Foundation of Arts Fellowship in Poetry. Her book, *Surge*, was recently released by Great Weather for Media. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in Writing and Rhetoric at Stony Brook University.

Barbara Reiher-Meyers is a Long Island poet and former board member of the Long Island Poetry Collective and the North Sea Poetry Scene. Barbara has coordinated events for the Northport Arts Coalition and Smithtown Township Arts Council, among others, and conducted poetry workshops. Barbara sends weekly Emails of poetry events, and has been named Poet of the year 2018 by the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association.

Russ Green is a Graduate of Hofstra University. He has been co-editor at Great Weather for Media and has put on reading series and events all over Long Island and NYC. He now focuses on organizing social justice based events in poetry and the arts. His first book, *Gimme Back My Radio*, is out with Night Ballet Press. He lives by Port Jeff Harbor where he eats, writes and walks by the water.

Poetry for the HART is a Public Art Initiative project developed by the Town's Public Art Advisory Committee in conjunction with Teenspeak, Co-Lead Agency, who suggested the project to the Town. Teens in the community from ages 14-18 were invited last fall to submit poems for consideration in the program. A Selection Panel comprised of the poets **Barbara Reiher-Meyers** and **Russell Green**, as well as Panel Chairman **Jim Metcalfe**, a member of the Town's Public Art Advisory Committee, were charged with reviewing the 222 different submissions from 164 different teen poets and narrowing the choices to the winning poems. Additional partners in this project include Heckscher Museum of Art; Huntington Arts Council; *The Long Islander*, which has pledged to publish the winning poems; REACH CYA; Town of Huntington Youth Bureau; Tri-Community Youth Agency; the award reception host – Walt Whitman Birthplace Association; and Youth Directions & Alternatives CYA, as well as numerous area teachers who actively encouraged their students' participation. Subsequent to the ceremonies, colorful placards, each bearing a winning poem, will be placed in the interior advertising spaces on buses throughout the HART system. Information on previous winners of the Poetry for the HART program and their winning poems can be found at www.HuntingtonNY.gov/HARTpoetry.

The names of the winning teen poets and text of their winning poems will be available following the April 23 event. For further information on *Poetry for the HART* or other Town of Huntington Public Art Initiative projects, contact John Coraor, Director of Cultural Affairs, at 631-351-3099 or via e-mail: jcoraor@HuntingtonNY.gov.

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