

mpt  PRESENTS

NEA **BIG READ**

FEATURING CATALOG OF UNABASHED GRATITUDE

poetry contest

NEA Big Read is a program designed to broaden our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Maryland Public Television (MPT) was selected to receive an NEA Big Read grant to support a community reading program and will focus on ***Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*** by Ross Gay.

Be sure to check out additional MPT events relating to the NEA Big Read at mpt.org/neabigread.

*NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts
in partnership with Arts Midwest.*

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**
 **BIG READ**
Managed by Arts Midwest

arts.gov/neabigread

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Prepared by
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Audience Engagement
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about the book: *catalog of unabashed gratitude*

A poet, educator, and community gardener, Ross Gay tends to joy as one would an orchard—from seedlings to harvest, through all seasons of growth. In his collection, *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, Gay demonstrates the practice of gratitude while never losing sight of the loss that animates it. Through 24 lyric poems, Ross Gay’s *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude* offers a luminous exploration of death, life, and their many tides. Animated by what Gay has called the “discipline of gratitude,” the collection considers sorrow’s potential, grounded in the rhythms and abundance of the natural world: the compost that gives way to rich soil, the decay that reveals seeds, the branches that must be trimmed to make room for new growth.



about the author: *ross gay*

Ross Gay was born in Youngstown, Ohio, but moved with his family at a young age to an apartment complex just outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he grew up listening to his parents’ old records and playing games of manhunt and pickup football with the other children who lived in the building. It was in those games that he first learned to negotiate collaborative practices; to create shared languages. Gay’s father was a restaurant manager and his mother was a teacher and a copyeditor; they cultivated a passion for both language and food in their children. Gay’s older brother became an English teacher and high school principal and food—its joy, its practice, its ability to nurture—figure frequently in Gay’s writing.



poetry contest fact sheet

Prizes:

Top 3 writers will be featured at the Open Mic Night at Manor Mill (June 1 at 7pm)

1st Place : \$500

2nd Place: \$300

3rd Place: \$200

Submission Guidelines:

- 1,000 maximum word count
- Poem should be roughly related to the themes provided
- Poem must be in English
- One prize per person (however multiple entries are allowed)
- Original non-published poem
- Standard participant must be age 16 and above

Deadline: May 12, 5pm

Submission Instructions:

Submit your poem via the form linked below.

<https://mptevents.wufoo.com/forms/qf4nu1a1rqm2bm/>

Judges:

A panel of judges will review submission and select the top three poets to be featured in the Open Mic Night on June 1, which is an in-person event at the Manor Mill (located at 2029 Monkton Rd., Monkton MD 21111) event where contestants are given the opportunity to read their submissions.

Judging Criteria:

1. Adheres to Topic or references themes provided
2. Within maximum length of 1000 words
3. Organized and concise theme
4. Creativity and insight into subject matter
5. Proper grammar and mechanics

Themes/Topics:

Submissions should be thematically related to the poems found in Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude. Examples include: life and death, growth, the wonders of nature, gratitude, etc.