

PRESS RELEASE

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**Acclaimed Poet and Professor Evie Shockley to Read at  
NJCH's 50th Anniversary Gala**

The New Jersey Council for the Humanities is thrilled to announce that award-winning poet and professor Evie Shockley joins the lineup at our [50th Anniversary Gala](#) at Morven Museum and Gardens on September 29 at 6:00 pm as a featured "Humanities Moment" reader.

Shockley's poetry collections include *suddenly we* (forthcoming, March 2023), and the Hurston/Wright Award-winning books *the new black* and *semiautomatic*, the latter of which was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the *LA Times* Book Prize. Her scholarly work has been published in her book *Renegade Poetics: Black Aesthetics and Formal Innovation in African American Poetry*, and in such journals and volumes as *The Black Scholar*, *New Literary History*, *The New Emily Dickinson Studies*, and *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernist Poetry*.

She has received the Lannan Literary Award for Poetry, the Stephen Henderson Award, the Holmes National Poetry Prize, and fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, ACLS, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and Cave Canem, among other honors. Shockley serves as Editor for Poetry at *Contemporary Literature* and is the Zora Neale Hurston Distinguished Professor of English at Rutgers University.

"The poet Lucille Clifton once remarked that 'poetry is a matter of life, not just a matter of language,' and few contemporary poets' work evinces this truth better than that of Evie Shockley," said NJCH Executive Director Carin Berkowitz, PhD. "At a time when so many of us are looking to the cultural sphere for solace, for joy, for a reflection of the most difficult realities about ourselves and our nation, her poetry offers all those gifts and more."

NJCH Director of Strategic Initiatives and poetry scholar Valerie Popp, PhD remarked: "In addition to her profound contributions to the arts and humanities as a poet, Professor Shockley's work as a literary critic, teacher, and mentor has reshaped the world of Black

literary and cultural studies, particularly the often-overlooked field of Black experimental poetry and poetics. We are honored to feature Professor Shockley and her verse as we celebrate the public humanities in New Jersey together."

Tickets are on sale now for the Gala, a convivial evening of music, food, and poetry which will also feature a special presentation of the inaugural Stanley N. Katz Prize for Excellence in Public Humanities.

To join NJCH in reflecting upon the past five decades together, tickets can be purchased online at <https://new-jersey-council-for-the-humanities.ticketleap.com/50th-anniversary-gala/> or by contacting Operations Manager Colleen Tryner at (609) 695-4908.

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