

# Poetry by the Sea February Release

*Outstanding Poets at 2019 Poetry by the Sea; a Global Conference!*

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*Able Muse award winner  
Melissa Balmain*

All-Star Poets Headline 2019 [Poetry by the Sea](#): A Global Conference

Madison, Conn. Feb. 20, 2019 - No matter the sport, aspiring professional athletics flock to training camps for invaluable instruction from coaches, players and former players that can help improve their game.

Poetry by the Sea, a Global Conference, is the same for poets, with this difference: everyone, faculty and students alike, is still in the game, each laboring to bend words to

their will.

Held May 21 to May 24 at the 33-acre Mercy by the Sea Retreat Center on Long Island Sound in Madison, Conn., Poetry by the Sea offers four days of immersion in the art form with some of the top poets writing and teaching today.

National Book Award and MacArthur Foundation grant winner [Terrance Hayes](#) will deliver the keynote address.

[Alicia E. Stallings](#), National Book Critics Award finalist and director of the Athens, Greece Poetry Center, will give the annual conference lecture.

“I Can’t Talk About the Trees Without the Blood,” collection author Tiana Clark, Milton Kessler Poetry Book Award finalist Sean Thomas Dougherty, Pushcart Prize winner and Stanford University Stegner Fellow Richie Hofmann, and National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize finalist Adrian Matejka will give featured readings.

You can see the full Poetry by the Sea schedule by clicking here. You can also visit their webpage, <http://www.poetrybytheseaconference.org/schedule.htm>.

“It's a jewel of a conference - several days of eating, breathing, and sleeping poetry in one of the loveliest spots on the East Coast,” said Able Muse Book Award winner Melissa Balmain, who will lead a three-day workshop.

“I love how diverse the attendees are, and how even the most famous poets there seem to care very little about hierarchy,” Balmain said. “Last year I was chatting with this funny, friendly woman at one of the cocktail receptions, and it took me a couple moments to realize, holy cats, she's (former US Poet Laureate) Rita Dove.”

“Poetry by the Sea weaves an unusually diverse collection of poetic ideas and communities into a gracious tapestry,” said poet and writer Annie Finch, who will provide metrical consultations at the 2019 gathering.

"There are superstar poetry readings; panels on a range of topics spanning formal craft, free verse, and performance poetry; good food; and unforgettable moments," Finch said. "I don't know of any other poetry conference that is at once so serious and worthwhile, so inclusive and open-minded, and so fun."

"Poetry by the Sea gives us a community and sense of solidarity," said poet Martin Espáda, who will lead one of several three-day workshops. "It offers a sense of urgency. We're all there to accomplish the same thing, acting in concert to find a voice."

"Poetry by the Sea is a significant event because it is a conference where writers gather to be in each other's company in service to an art," said Michael Shewmaker, the Jones Lecturer in Poetry at Stanford University. Shewmaker has attended Poetry by the Sea as a participant, reader and faculty. "There is space for everyone--beginners and experts alike.

"As someone who grew up largely without that sort of community, it is truly a gift."

Creating a diverse and supportive community was one of Poetry by the Sea founder Kim Bridgford's goals with the first 2015 conference.

"I love to balance ethnicity and gender so that many constituency groups can be honored and represented," Bridgford said. "I dreamt of bringing the best people together for days of poetry and conversation, to discuss the poetic wonder, that magic. I wanted to have different ages and voices. We have about every age in the audience. High school students have presented."

Bridgford is also editor of the Mezzo Cammin Women's Poet Timeline Project, which aims to create the world's largest database of women poets. She said Yale University professor and friend Dolores Hayden suggested the Mercy by the Sea Retreat Center location.

"If you were imagining the perfect setting for a conference, it would be this gorgeous place," Bridgford said. "We even have our own chef."

The location is a poet's dream.

"The Sound is beautiful and it invites a certain type of introspection that is conducive to the writing process," said Shewmaker. "I always come away from the conference feeling energized."

"Did I mention the food," said Balmain. "The kitchen staff deserves a Michelin star."

Poetry by the Sea offers several attendance packages, with on-site and offsite housing rates. A limited number of scholarships are available. Evening attendance tickets are also available.

Rooms at the Mercy by the Sea Center are limited, but there are a variety of housing options available nearby, including Bed & Breakfasts and hotels.

To see the 2019 faculty, register, or for more information, click [here](#), or go to the Poetry by the Sea website, <http://www.poetrybytheseaconference.org/index.htm>.

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