

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Lauren Russell to join faculty of Residential College in the Arts & Humanities (RCAH) at Michigan State University for fall 2020**

EAST LANSING, MI—The Residential College in the Arts and Humanities (RCAH) at Michigan State University is delighted to announce that Lauren Russell will join the faculty in fall 2020 as an assistant professor and Director of the RCAH Center for Poetry.

Russell is the author of *What's Hanging on the Hush* (Ahsahta Press, 2017) and *Descent* (Tarpaulin Sky Press, forthcoming June 2020). A 2017 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow in Poetry, she has also received fellowships from Cave Canem, The Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing, and VIDA/The Home School, and residencies from the Rose O'Neill Literary House at Washington College, the Millay Colony for the Arts, and City of Asylum/Passa Porta.

Her work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, the Academy of American Poets' *Poem-a-Day*, *boundary 2*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Cream City Review*, and the anthologies *Bettering American Poetry 2015* and *Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry*, among others. She is currently a research assistant professor in English and is assistant director of the Center for African American Poetry and Poetics at the University of Pittsburgh.

About the appointment, Russell states:

In his 2019 collection, *The Tradition*, Jericho Brown writes, "A poem is a gesture toward home." I read this line while sheltering in place in the Pittsburgh apartment that has been my literal home for the last three years, and in poetry, which has been my figurative home for a lifetime. If the COVID-19 crisis has taught me anything, it is that the unexpected is already happening—and through radical acts of imagination and care, within heightened constraints, we can begin to make our way forward, apart but together. This is the kind of attention that poetry demands, while offering a sense of immediacy and community across physical distances. As the pandemic has revealed a great capacity for kindness *and* thrown long-existing inequities into sharper relief, poets and poetry centers must begin to reimagine how to meet new and unforeseen future challenges and needs. I look forward to making a home in East Lansing in the months to come, and I am thrilled to join the RCAH Center for Poetry, which has been making a home for poetry as a force in people's lives for so long.

Russell's appointment comes as RCAH professor and Center for Poetry founding director Anita Skeen retires and retains the position of series editor for the Center's Wheelbarrow Books Poetry Prize.

#### **About the RCAH Center for Poetry at MSU**

The RCAH Center for Poetry opened in the fall of 2007 to encourage the reading, writing, and discussion of poetry and to create an awareness of the place and power of poetry in our everyday lives. We think about this in a number of ways, including through readings, performances, community outreach, and workshops. We believe that poetry is and should be fun, accessible, and meaningful. We are at work building a poetry community in the Greater Lansing area and beyond.

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**Residential College in  
the Arts and  
Humanities**

**Center for Poetry**

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