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**The MAX to Host Book Event for Famed Mississippi Poet  
*Trethewey Served as National, State Poet Laureate***

MERIDIAN, Miss. (May 1, 2024) – The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) on May 30 will host a public event featuring the latest release of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Natasha Trethewey.

Trethewey, a Gulfport native and creative writing professor, will discuss her memoir, *The House of Being (Why I Write)*, during the 5:30-7:30 p.m. event in the museum's Hall of Fame. The free gathering will include a reception with light drinks and appetizers, and a book signing.

The museum urges those who plan to attend to register at [www.msarts.org](http://www.msarts.org).

The MAX is featuring Trethewey in partnership with the Mississippi Book Festival in Jackson, now celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Trethewey's new memoir will be among works highlighted at the festival on Sept. 14.

The writer also is among arts figures to be added to the MAX Hall of Fame this year, with an induction ceremony scheduled for Jan. 23, 2025, at the MSU Riley Center in downtown Meridian.

A description of Trethewey's new book notes, "In a shotgun house in Gulfport, Mississippi, at the crossroads of Highway 49, the legendary highway of the Blues, and Jefferson Street, Natasha Trethewey learned to read and write. In this intimate and searching meditation, Trethewey revisits the geography of her childhood to trace the origins of her writing life, born of the need to create new metaphors to inhabit 'so that my story would not be determined for me.'"

"We are pleased to partner with the Mississippi Book Festival to celebrate Mississippi authors and their work," said Penny Kemp, The MAX President and CEO. "Natasha's second memoir is particularly relevant to The MAX mission of honoring Mississippi's creative legacy while highlighting the role our state plays in shaping authors and other creators across all art forms."

Trethewey served two terms as the 19th Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-2014). She is the author of five collections of poetry, *Monument* (2018), which was longlisted for the 2018 National Book Award; *Thrall* (2012); *Native Guard* (2006), for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, *Bellocq's Ophelia* (2002); and *Domestic Work* (2000), which was selected by Rita Dove as the winner of the inaugural Cave Canem Poetry Prize for the best first book by an African American poet and won both the 2001 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Book Prize and the 2001 Lillian Smith Award for Poetry.

In addition to her poetry, Trethewey is the author of two memoirs *The House of Being* (2024) and *Memorial Drive* (2020). Her book of nonfiction, *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*, appeared in 2010. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Beinecke Library at Yale, and the Bunting Fellowship Program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. At Northwestern University she is a Board of Trustees Professor of English in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. In 2012 she was named Poet Laureate of the State of Mississippi and in 2013 she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

To learn more about the Mississippi Book Festival, visit their website at [msbookfestival.com](http://msbookfestival.com) or follow them on Facebook, Instagram (@msbookfestival), or Twitter (@msbookfest).

### **About The MAX**

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience explores the state's creative legacies in one immersive attraction. Here, visitors of all ages explore the global impact of Mississippians on music, literature, acting, painting, cuisine, and other arts. The MAX honors our state's extraordinary contributions and inspires the next generation through a unique blend of interactive exhibits and programming. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world's arts and entertainment icons – Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Eudora Welty, Morgan Freeman, and Jim Henson, to name just a few.

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