

Media Contact:

Steve Runk
Director of Communications
Lewis Center for the Arts
Princeton University
185 Nassau Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08544
srunk@princeton.edu
609.258.5262

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**Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts Announces Recipient of the
Holmes National Poetry Prize
*Poet Solmaz Sharif Selected for Prestigious Award***



Photo caption: Solmaz Sharif, recipient of the Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes National Poetry Prize awarded by the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in Creative Writing at Princeton University.

Photo credit: Photo by Arash Saedinia

(Princeton, NJ) Poet Solmaz Sharif has been selected as the latest recipient of the Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes National Poetry Prize awarded by the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in Creative Writing at Princeton University.

The Holmes National Poetry Prize was established in memory of Princeton 1951 alumnus Theodore H. Holmes and is presented each year to a poet of special merit as nominated and

selected by the faculty of the Creative Writing Program, which includes writers Jeffrey Eugenides, Jhumpa Lahiri, Yiyun Li, Paul Muldoon, Kirstin Valdez Quade, James Richardson, Tracy K. Smith, and Susan Wheeler. The award currently carries a prize of \$5,000, and was first made to Mark Doty in 2011 and has since also been awarded to Evie Shockley, Natalie Diaz, Matt Rasmussen, and Eduardo Corral.

Born in Istanbul to Iranian parents, Sharif holds degrees from University of California, Berkeley, where she studied and taught with June Jordan's Poetry for the People, and New York University. Her work has appeared in *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, *The Kenyon Review*, *jubilat*, *Gulf Coast*, *Boston Review*, *Witness*, and others. The former managing director of the Asian American Writers' Workshop, her work has been recognized with a "Discovery"/*Boston Review* Poetry Prize, scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, a winter fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, and a Stegner Fellowship. She received a 2014 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer's Award, as well as a Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Fellowship. Sharif is currently a lecturer at Stanford University. Her first poetry collection, *Look*, published by Graywolf Press in 2016, was a finalist for the National Book Award.

"Solmaz Sharif's poems marry an exquisite lyric sensibility to a profound social conscience, and in so doing they urge a renewed sensitivity to the private costs of public conflict," notes Tracy K. Smith, Director of the Program in Creative Writing. "They are also beautifully and inventively crafted, never letting readers forget that what is at stake begins in language."

Princeton's Program in Creative Writing is unique in its focus exclusively on undergraduates. Nearly 500 students participate each year in small workshop courses, averaging eight to ten students, to pursue original work in fiction, poetry, screenwriting, and translation under the guidance of practicing, award-winning writers who provide intensive feedback and instruction for both beginning and advanced writers. Through the program, students can earn a certificate in creative writing in addition to their degree in a major. Each year, these 20 to 30 selected seniors work individually with a member of the faculty on a creative writing thesis, such as a novel, screenplay, or a collection of short stories, poems, or translations.

The Program presents an annual reading series, free and open to the public, that this coming year will include Yiyun Li, Eduardo C. Corral, Nathaniel Mackey, Rachel Cusk, Hoa Nguyen, Alaa Al Aswany, Linda Gregerson, Luc Sante, Osama Alomar, Walter Mosley, and Jane Hirshfield, Princeton Class of 1973. An additional reading series, hosted by the seniors in the program, presents a public showcase for the work of the thesis students and provides the senior class the opportunity to read with and learn from established writers they admire.

To learn more about the Lewis Center for the Arts and the Program in Creative Writing, visit arts.princeton.edu.

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