

TOMMYE BLOUNT (*poetry, 2013*) RECEIVES 2023 WHITING AWARD



2013 poetry alumnus Tommye Blount is among the ten recipients of the 2023 Whiting Awards, announced on March 29.

The Whiting Awards, established by the Whiting Foundation in 1985 and celebrating their 38th anniversary, remain one of the most esteemed and largest monetary gifts (\$50,000) for emerging writers. They are given to recognize early-career achievement and empower recipients to fulfill the promise of exceptional literary work to come. A total of \$9.5 million has been awarded to 370 fiction and nonfiction writers, poets, and playwrights to date.

“Every year we look to the new Whiting Award winners, writing fearlessly at the edge of imagination, to reveal the pathways of our thought and our acts before we know them ourselves,” said Courtney Hodell, Director of Literary Programs. “The prize is meant to create a space of ease in which such transforming work can be made.”

The ceremony will include a keynote by Pulitzer Prize winner and PEN president **Ayad Akhtar**. There will also be a reading by the 2023 Whiting Award winners on March 30th at The Center for Fiction at 6:30pm ET.

Tommye is the tenth graduate of the MFA Program for Writers at WWC to receive a Whiting Award. Previous recipients, all poetry alumni, include: Elizabeth Arnold (1996), Catherine Barnett (2002), Brian Blanchfield (1999), Mark Doty (1979), Roger Fanning (1989), Jenny Johnson (2011), A. Van Jordan (1997), Mary Karr (1979), and Martha Zweig (1998).

[You can read about this year’s recipients here.](#)

Tommye Blount grew up in Detroit, Michigan and earned an MFA from Warren Wilson College. He is the author of the poetry collection *Fantasia for the Man in Blue* (2020) and the chapbook *What Are We Not For* (2016). *Fantasia for the Man in Blue* was a 2020 National Book Award Finalist in Poetry. Blount has been awarded scholarships and fellowships from the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, Cave Canem, and Kresge Arts. He lives in Novi, Michigan.

