



## The Robert Creeley Foundation

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January 21, 2016

Board of Selectmen  
Acton Town Hall  
472 Main St.  
Acton, MA 01720

Members of the Board:

The Robert Creeley Foundation, Inc. requests the approval of the Board of Selectmen to use \$1000 from the Georgia Whitney Memorial Fund to help finance the 2016 Robert Creeley Award and associated Helen Creeley Student Poetry Prize. The Whitney Fund was established to support events that enrich the high school students and adults of Acton.

The selection committee of the Foundation has chosen Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy K. Smith as the 16<sup>th</sup> recipient of the Robert Creeley Award.

Tracy's first collection, *The Body's Question*, won the Cave Canem Poetry Prize in 2002. Her second book, *Duende*, won the 2006 James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets. Her 2011 collection, *Life on Mars*, won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. More recently, she was the recipient of the 2014 Academy of American Poets Fellowship.

Born in 1972 and raised in Falmouth, MA, she received her MFA from Columbia and is currently Director of Princeton University's creative writing program.

Ms. Smith will read in the ABRHS auditorium the evening of March 29 and visit the high school the next day to read to students and field questions about writing and the life of a writer.

Creeley Award events continue to grow in scope and popularity, with hundreds of people attending each event. This year the Helen Creeley Student Poetry Prize competition has drawn well over 100 responses from more than 45 public and private high schools across the state.

We hope the Board will agree that this program is of great value and approve expending \$1000 from the Georgia Whitney Fund.

Sincerely,

Marcia Rich, Treasurer  
Robert Creeley Foundation, Inc.

Attachments: Biography of Tracy K. Smith; Georgia Whitney Fund Approval Form

## Approval of Expenditure from Georgia E. Whitney Fund

The will which established the Georgia E. Whitney Fund named an advisory board consisting of the members of the Board of Selectmen, the Superintendent of Schools and the Principal of the high school. This board is to review and consider requests for expenditures from the fund for events of a cultural and educational nature for the benefit of the citizens of Acton and the students of the Acton schools.

The undersigned have reviewed such a request for \$1000 to be expended to support the 2016 Robert Creeley Award poetry reading to be held in Acton on March 29, 2016, and approve this request.

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Katie Green, Chairman  
Town of Acton Board of Selectmen

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Date

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Glenn A. Brand, Superintendent  
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

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Date

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JoAnn Campbell, Principal  
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

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Date

## Tracy K. Smith



Photo credit: Tina Chang

Born on April 16, 1972, Tracy K. Smith was raised in Falmouth, Massachusetts. She studied at Harvard, where she joined the Dark Room Collective, a reading series for writers of color. She went on to receive her MFA from Columbia University.

Smith's first collection, *The Body's Question*, won the Cave Canem Poetry Prize in 2002. Her second book, *Duende*, won the 2006 James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets. Her 2011 collection, *Life on Mars*, won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

A review of *Duende* in *The New York Times Book Review* stated, "The most persuasively haunted poems here are those where [Smith] casts herself not simply as a dutiful curator of personal history but a canny medium of fellow feeling and the stirrings of the collective unconscious...it's this charged air of rapt apprehension that gives her spare, fluid lines their coolly incantatory tenor."

Smith is the recipient of the 2014 Academy of American Poets Fellowship. About Tracy K. Smith, Academy of American Poets Chancellor Toi Derricotte said: "The surfaces of a Tracy K. Smith poem are beautiful and serene, but underneath, there is always a sense of an unknown vastness. Her poems take the risk of inviting us to imagine, as the poet does, what it is to travel in another person's shoes. The Academy is fortunate to be able to confer this fitting recognition on one of the most important poets of our time."

Her other awards and honors include a Wallace Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University, a 2004 Rona Jaffe Writers Award, a 2008 Essence Literary Award, a grant from the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, a fellowship from the Breadloaf Writers' Conference, and a 2005 Whiting Award. She is the director of Princeton University's creative writing program.

Credit: [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org)