



The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the Divine

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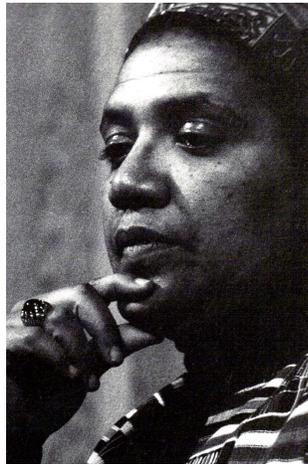
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**POET, ESSAYIST, AND ACTIVIST AUDRE LORDE
TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN POETS CORNER
AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**



Virtual induction ceremony to include the carving of memorial stone

The past year has been dramatically different from those that came before, but the traditions and signature events that have made the Cathedral of St. John the Divine a beloved cultural institution continue, albeit online rather than in-person. In a twist on one of its long-standing traditions, the Cathedral will celebrate the life and works of Audre Lorde, poet, essayist, feminist, educator and activist, **with a virtual induction ceremony into its American Poets Corner on Thursday, February 18 at 6 pm online via Zoom.** Readers and participants will include members of Lorde's family and fellow poets including Dante Micheaux, Rachel Eliza Griffiths, Martha Collins, Cathedral Poet in Residence Marie Howe, United States Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, and more to be announced.



The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the Divine

Page 2 cont.

Lorde's writings are both deeply personal and committed to a liberatory political vision. Her poems and essays openly discuss her lesbianism, Blackness, motherhood, cancer diagnoses, and many other facets of her life, exploding notions of both white male dominance and cultural homogeneity within progressive social movements. These many layers of selfhood, expressed through lyrical writings both prose and poetic, celebrate difference, inviting readers to draw upon their own personal journeys to add to the shared fight for justice and community.

At the time of Lorde's election, in the spring of 2020, for induction into the American Poets Corner, the Cathedral still hoped to be able to invite lovers of great literature into its soaring Gothic interior for an in-person ceremony, customarily held in early November. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the need for heightened safety, however, the delayed tribute will instead be held online on February 18, the anniversary of Lorde's birthday. Even in the context of a digital celebration, important Poets Corner traditions will still be maintained: a memorial stone, carved with Lorde's dates and a quotation from her poem, "A Litany for Survival," will be laid in the Cathedral, placing Lorde amongst her fellow American literary giants.

Later this spring, when the subsequent author is elected for the Cathedral's ensuing Poets Corner induction, it is anticipated that the ceremony will return to its usual place and time inside the Cathedral's great Nave, affording the opportunity to celebrate the new inductee, and also to celebrate the induction of Audre Lorde, in person, with friends.

Candidates for induction were nominated by the Electors to the Poets Corner under the guidance of Cathedral Poet in Residence Marie Howe. The American Poets Corner, established in 1984 to memorialize and celebrate American writers, is modeled after a similar alcove at Westminster Abbey in London. Previous inductees include Emily Dickinson, e. e. cummings, Tennessee Williams, James Baldwin, Flannery O'Connor, Zora Neale Hurston, and last year's dual honorees, Harriet Jacobs and Ralph Ellison. The American Poets Corner and Cathedral poetry events have become an integral part of the literary landscape of New York.

For more information on this year's induction, visit stjohndivine.org.

About The Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership. People from many faiths and communities worship together in services held more than 30 times a week; the soup kitchen serves roughly 25,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; Advancing the Community of Tomorrow, the



The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the Divine

Page 3 cont.

renowned preschool, afterschool and summer program, offers diverse educational and nurturing experiences; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.

About the American Poets Corner

Poets, fiction writers, essayists, and dramatists: the American Poets Corner memorializes the literature of our nation in all its surprise, wit and beauty. The Poets Corner, beloved by visitors, has earned respect for its choices of inductees, and for the high quality of its Electors and Poets in Residence, which include 17 U.S. Poets Laureate and winners of every literary prize an American writer can aspire to, including the Nobel. Marie Howe, the current Poet in Residence, joined the Cathedral in 2019, making this her first induction.

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