



## Featured Writer

**TRACY K. SMITH**

2-time U.S. Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize Winner

Tracy K. Smith received the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in poetry for her third book of poems, *Life on Mars*. The collection draws upon the genre of science fiction in considering who we humans are and what the vast universe holds for us. In poems of political urgency, tenderness, elegy and wit, Smith conjures version upon version of the future, imagines the afterlife, and contemplates life here on earth in our institutions, cities, houses and hearts. *Life on Mars* was a New York Times Notable Book, a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, and a New Yorker, Library Journal, and Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year. Smith's debut collection, *The Body's Question*, was selected by Kevin Young as winner of the Cave Canem Prize for the best first book by an African American poet. *Duende*, Smith's second book, received the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets. Smith's fourth book of poems, *Wade in the Water*, won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. Smith served two terms as Poet Laureate of the United States, during which time she traveled across America, hosting poetry readings and conversations in rural communities. She edited the anthology *American Journal: Fifty Poems for Our Time* during her laureateship, and launched the American Public Media podcast *The Slowdown*. In March 2021 she was voted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Smith wrote the libretto for two operas; *Castor and Patience*, in collaboration with composer Gregory Spears, is rooted in a conflict over historically black-owned land. The work premiered with the Cincinnati Opera in July 2022. Smith is a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at Harvard Radcliffe Institute and a professor of English and of African and African American Studies in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences.