

A DISCUSSION WITH
JESMYN WARD

50 | CELEBRATION
YEARS | OF WOMEN
AT COLGATE

MARCH 4, 2022
6:00 p.m.
Colgate Memorial Chapel

PROGRAM

Welcome, Jennifer Brice, associate professor of English

Discussion with Jesmyn Ward, moderated by **CJ Hauser**, associate professor of English, and **Dana Cypress**, assistant professor of English

Student Question and Answer Session

Audience Question and Answer Session

Closing, Jennifer Brice

JESMYN WARD

Acclaimed American Author

*Presented by the Kerschner Family Series
Global Leaders at Colgate and Living Writers.*

Hailed as “the new Toni Morrison” by the American Booksellers Association, MacArthur Genius and two-time National Book Award winner Jesmyn Ward is the author of fiction, nonfiction, and a memoir that *The New York Times Book Review* called “raw, beautiful and dangerous.”

In 2017, she became the first woman and first person of color to win the National Book Award for Fiction twice — joining the ranks of William



Faulkner, Saul Bellow, John Cheever, Philip Roth, and John Updike. Ward's novels, primarily set on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, are deeply informed by the trauma of Hurricane Katrina. *Salvage the Bones*, winner of the 2011 National Book Award, is a troubling but ultimately empowering tale of familial bonds set amid the chaos of the hurricane. *Men We Reaped: A Memoir*, deals with the loss of five young men in her life — to drugs, accidents, suicide — and the bad luck that follows people who live in poverty. Ward edited the critically acclaimed anthology *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race*, a *New York Times* bestseller.

Her newest novel, the critically acclaimed *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, won the 2017 National Book Award. Named “a searing, urgent read for anyone who thinks the shadows of slavery and Jim Crow have passed” (Celeste Ng), *Sing* was named one of the best books of 2017 by *The New York Times*, *Time*, *the Washington Post*, and *Publishers Weekly*. The novel was also nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Aspen Words Literary Prize.

Ward's latest is *Navigate Your Stars*, an adaptation of her 2018 Tulane University Commencement speech that champions the value of hard work and the importance of respect for oneself and others.

A professor of creative writing at Tulane University and contributing editor to *Vanity Fair*, Ward received the 2016 Strauss Living Award and a 2017 MacArthur Genius Grant, and she was named one of *Time*'s 100 most influential people of 2018.

About the Kerschner Family Series Global Leaders at Colgate

Launched in 2007 and sponsored by Colgate's Parents' and Grandparents' Fund, the Kerschner Family Series Global Leaders at Colgate has brought to campus notable individuals whose work has had a global impact. Encounters with these world leaders help students to prepare for lives of leadership and to contribute to the advancement of local communities and global society.

About the Colgate Living Writers Program

Founded more than 40 years ago by Professor Frederick Busch, Colgate Living Writers is a master class in how works of literature come to be. Participants read selected works and then engage in fascinating conversations with their writers, some world-famous and others on the cusp of renown.

This signature program is now both a regular course (Engl. 360), offered every fall for 50 undergraduates, as well as a companion program for alumni, parents, and community members. It is led by faculty in the Department of English with generous support from the Olive B. O'Connor Fund as well as the president and the provost/dean of the faculty.