

# Poet, OU lecturer headlines Maurice Brown Memorial Poetry Reading



Dunya Mikhail, internationally celebrated poet and Oakland University special lecturer of Arabic in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, will be the featured poet at this year's Maurice Brown Memorial Poetry Reading event on October 22 at 5 p.m. in the Oakland Center Banquet Room B. The event is free and open to the public. (Photo by Robert Akrawi)

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Mikhail's poetry reading will feature musical accompaniment on traditional Middle Eastern instruments by musicians Nashwan Pola (oud), Victor Ghannam (qanun), and Edy Fadel (riq).

"This year's Maurice Brown reading is a fantastic occasion for the entire OU community to gather and celebrate Dunya Mikhail and her incredible work as well as global traditions of poetry accompanied by music," said [Katie Hartsock, assistant professor in the Department of English](#). "We heartily thank Professor Brown's family for continuing to support this series which honors his love of poetry and allows us to bring inspiring poets to campus every year - although, this year's poet is already on our campus! How lucky we are to have Dunya Mikhail at OU - sometimes I still get a jolt of delight when I remember I teach just a couple classrooms away from her in South Foundation Hall."

Mikhail earned a place on the 2018 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship list in the Poetry category. Mikhail's other professional honors include the Knight Foundation grant, the Kresge Fellowship, and the United Nations Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing. She is also the co-founder of Michigan-community-based Mesopotamian Forum for Art and Culture.

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Mikhail is renowned for her subversive, innovative, and satirical poetry. After graduation from the University of Baghdad, she worked as a journalist and translator for the Baghdad Observer. Facing censorship and interrogation, she left Iraq, traveling first to Jordan and then to America where she now resides in suburban Detroit.

Her first book in English *The War Works Hard* (translated by Elizabeth Winslow) was named one of "25 Books to Remember from 2005" by the New York Public Library. *Diary of A Wave Outside the Sea* won the Arab American Book Award. Her book, *The Beekeeper: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq* (co-translated with Max Weiss) was selected by Publishers Weekly as one of the top 10 in non-fiction for spring 2018 and was featured on television's *PBS NewsHour*. Her newest book of poetry, *In Her Feminine Sign*, was released this summer.

The Maurice Brown Memorial Poetry Reading was created as a tribute to professor Maurice F. Brown, a beloved English professor who taught at OU between 1961-1985. The Maurice F. Brown Collection of Contemporary Poetry at Kresge Library is dedicated to his memory.

The event is sponsored this year by Oakland University's Department of English and Creative Writing program and co-sponsored by the Honors College. The event also benefits from the continued support of Judy Brown and Mathilde Brown Swanson.

Past guest poets in the series include:

- 2018-19 Aire D. Matthews
- 2017-18 Lorna Goodison
- 2016-17 Carolyn Forché
- 2015-16 Reginald Dwayne Betts
- 2014-15 Stephen Dunn
- 2013-14 Laura Kasischke
- 2012-13 Philip Levine
- 2011-12 Robert Vander Molen
- 2010-11 Molly Peacock
- 2009-12 Dennis Hinrichsen and David James
- 2008-09 Albert Goldbarth
- 2007-08 Sharon Bryan
- 2006-07 Vijay Seshadri
- 2005-06 Wendy Barker
- 2004-05 Carl Dennis
- 2003-04 Linda Gregerson
- 2002-03 Billy Collins
- 2001-02 Myronn Hardy

- 2000-01 Linda Bierds
- 1999-2000 Dennis Sampson
- 1998-99 Marianne Boruch
- 1997-98 Charles Wright
- 1996-97 Pattiann Rogers
- 1995-96 Rodney Jones
- 1994-95 Joan Murray
- 1993-94 Barry Wallenstein
- 1992-93 Helen Vendler
- 1991-92 Thomas Lynch
- 1990-91 Colette Inez
- 1989-90 Donald Revell
- 1988-89 Thomas Lynch

For more information on the event, email Professor Katie Hartssock at [hartssock@oakland.edu](mailto:hartssock@oakland.edu) or call the Department of English at 248-370-2251.