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## Award-Winning Poet, Essayist to Deliver Earth Day Keynote Address

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## Award-Winning Poet, Essayist to Deliver Earth Day Keynote Address

**Camille Dungy to close UM Green Week celebration April 22**

APRIL 18, 2018 BY [HALEY RENSCHLER](#)

**FaTvLiErCcSMPrSt**



Camille Dungy

OXFORD, Miss. – Camille Dungy, award-winning author and poet, is the **University of Mississippi's** 2018 Earth Day keynote speaker. She will close the 10th annual **UM Green Week** celebration with her talk, "It's All Environmental Writing" at 7 p.m. April 22, Earth Day, in the Overby Center Auditorium.

Dungy will read several of her own poems and excerpts from her essays and then contextualize her work within the framework of contemporary environmental writing. She also plans to elaborate on how the decisions we make when engaging in readings about the environment become statements about our relationships to it.

"As a woman of color, I find it is particularly important to share my voice on conversations related to environmental concerns because one of the most powerful things about writing is to be able to tell a truth that is yours, but that is likely also shared by other people," Dungy said. "Good literature makes us carefully and imaginatively pay more attention to the world, meaning I must also pay attention to people and all the ways we interact in the environment around us."

Dungy is a professor of environmental poetry and English at Colorado State University. She is a poet and essayist whose work focuses on the environment and is also an avid environmentalist.

She is best known for her work as editor of the anthology "Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry" (University of Georgia Press, 2009). "Black Nature" is the first collection of American nature writing that focuses on poetry written by African-Americans, and "it significantly challenges the propagated belief that black people have little or no creatively intellectual connection to the natural world," Dungy said.

"The key to success is persistence," she continued. "The struggle to care for the planet and our cohabitants demands persistence."

Dungy is also the author of four collections of poetry, "Trophic Cascade," "Smith Blue," "Suck on the Marrow" and "What to Eat, What to Drink, What to Leave for Poison." She debuted in prose in 2017 with the release of "Guidebook to Relative Strangers" (W.W. Norton, 2017), and has been featured in "Best American Poetry," "The 100 Best African American Poems" and nearly 30 other anthologies.

She is the recipient of an American Book Award, two Northern California Book Awards, two NAACP Image Award nominations and a California Book Award silver medal.

"Camille is an electrifying speaker and it is a privilege to bring her to campus as this year's Green Week keynote speaker," said Ann Fisher-Wirth, professor of [English](#) and director of the UM environmental studies minor. "I know her talk will be challenging and exciting."

Green Week is a week of events to celebrate the environment and the sustainability efforts in the area and strengthen the presence of sustainability at Ole Miss and in the Oxford community. The week starts Monday (April 16) and ends Sunday (April 22) with the keynote address from Dungy.

The Earth Day Keynote Address is sponsored by the UM environmental studies minor and the [Office of Sustainability](#). It is free and open to the public. For more information about Green Week and this year's events, go to <http://greenweek.olemiss.edu/>.

For more information about Dungy, visit her [website](#).

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