



NEWS RELEASE

Parliament of Canada

Appointment of the 10th Parliamentary Poet Laureate



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February 1, 2023 – Ottawa – The Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable George J. Furey, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honourable Anthony Rota, announced today the appointment of Marie-Célie Agnant as Canada's new [Parliamentary Poet Laureate](#), effective January 1, 2023. Ms. Agnant is the 10th poet to hold this office, succeeding Louise Bernice Halfe – Sky Dancer.

Marie-Célie Agnant was selected by the Speakers from a short list of candidates submitted by the Selection Committee, chaired by Dr. Heather Lank, Parliamentary Librarian, and composed of Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages; Leslie Weir, Librarian and Archivist of Canada; and Jesse Wentz, Chair, Canada Council for the Arts (represented by Joanne Larocque-Poirier, Chief of Staff and Corporate Secretary).

Born in Haiti, Marie-Célie Agnant has lived in Quebec since 1970. Active in the literary scene for 27 years, she has a substantial body of work for which she has won awards both within Canada and abroad. She has published three books of poetry, including *Femmes des terres brûlées*, which won the 2017 Alain-Grandbois poetry award from the *Académie des lettres du Québec*. Through her poetry, she explores themes, both timeless and contemporary, such as equality, justice, solitude, the status of women and racism.

Quotes

“Through her powerful writing and her social and community engagement, Ms. Agnant conveys the importance of a more equitable and supportive society— especially to young people. Indeed, several emerging writers have acknowledged the influence of Ms. Agnant and her work.”

– The Honourable George J. Furey, K.C., Speaker of the Senate

“Ms. Agnant’s work extends well beyond the words themselves. She demonstrates her humanity and commitment to the cause of oppressed people. Her writing radiates justice and resistance, gives readers courage, moves them and prompts reflection.”
– Honourable Anthony Rota, Speaker of the House of Commons

“I’m very eager to make the most of this new experience by extending a hand to children and leading them toward the enchanting realm of poetry. Thank you for this opportunity.”
– Marie-Célie Agnant, 10th Parliamentary Poet Laureate

The Parliamentary Poet Laureate Program

Federal legislators created the position of Parliamentary Poet Laureate in 2001 to build awareness of the reading and writing of poetry. Pursuant to the [Parliament of Canada Act](#), the Parliamentary Poet Laureate may perform a range of duties, including composing poetry, particularly for use in Parliament on important occasions; sponsoring poetry readings; advising the Parliamentary Librarian on enriching the cultural holdings of the Library’s collections; and performing related duties at the request of the Speaker of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Commons or the Parliamentary Librarian.

Biographical notes and a photo of Marie-Célie Agnant are available [online](#).

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