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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

### MTA Releases New Poems in Popular 'Poetry in Motion' Series

*New Pieces Selected to Resonate with Riders During Global Pandemic*

*See Latest 'Poetry in Motion' [Smelling the Wind](#)*

*See Latest 'Poetry in Motion' [A Night in a World](#)*

MTA Arts & Design today announced the release of two new poems as part of its popular 'Poetry in Motion' series. The two poems -- Smelling the Wind by Audre Lorde and A Night in the World by Heather McHugh -- were chosen in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America and speak eloquently to the hearts and minds of New Yorkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"With so many complex issues distracting us during these often stressful times, we look to the arts to sustain us," said **Sandra Bloodworth, Director of MTA Arts & Design**. "Whether serving as an outlet for expressing our response to what is happening around us or finding solace in words that speak to us in a thoughtful way, poetry stimulates an internal dialogue that engages us and calms us as we navigate the transit system."

"The poems by Audre Lorde and Heather McHugh remind us of the joy to be found in discovery and connection — with other people and with the natural world," said **Matt Brogan, Executive Director of Poetry Society of America**. "They are poems about 'traveling out,' whether to the distant stars or the face 'on my horizon,' poems that celebrate how love and the imagination can traverse the 'marvelous arithmetics of distance.'"

Poetry in Motion is presented in print on subway cars in premium, square frames. Digitally, it can be seen on screens in stations throughout the system. The two new works feature the poems, accompanied by imagery of artwork drawn from the MTA Arts & Design collection. "Smelling the Wind" by Audre Lorde features a portrait of the poet taken from "Beacons" (2019), a mosaic artwork by Rico Gaston permanently installed at the 167 St **B D** station in the Bronx. The work includes eight prominent figures associated with the borough. "A Night in the World" by Heather McHugh is paired with "Edges of a South Brooklyn Sky" (2018), an artwork by Sally Gil, permanently installed at the Avenue U **N** station in Brooklyn. The pairing introduces riders to artworks they may not yet have encountered in person.

#### The following is text of *Smelling the Wind*:

*Rushing headlong  
into new silence  
your face  
dips on my horizon  
The name  
of a cherished dream  
riding my anchor  
one sweet season  
to cast off  
on another voyage*

*No reckoning allowed  
save the marvelous arithmetics  
of distance*

#### The following is text of *A Night in a World*:

I wouldn't have know if I didn't stay home  
where the big dipper rises from, time  
and again: one mountain ash.

And I wouldn't have thought without travelling out  
how huge that dipper was,  
how small that tree.

**About the poets**

Audre Lorde was an award-winning poet who published 11 volumes of poetry and five works of prose before her death in 1992. She was also a professor of English at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Hunter College. She served as poet laureate of New York from 1991-1992.

Heather McHugh is the author of nine volumes of poetry and was on the short list of nominees for the Pulitzer Prize. She is a recipient of the MacArthur 'Genius' Grant and her work has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts. She has been a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2006.

**About the artists**

Rico Gatson is a multimedia visual artist whose work explores themes of history, identity, popular culture and spirituality, through sculpture, painting, video, and public art projects. Over the course of almost two decades, he has been celebrated for politically layered artworks, often based on significant moments in black history. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Sally Gil is an American artist, born in Vermont and based in Brooklyn. Her 2D works are made primarily of collaged imagery and her subject matter explores the intersection of the everyday mundane natural and man-made worlds with the magic and mystery of the unknown. Her works have been shown at the Brooklyn Museum and galleries in New York City, among others.

**About Poetry in Motion**

MTA's Poetry in Motion program has produced more than 200 poems or excerpts since its inception in 1992. After a hiatus of four years, from 2008 through 2011, the popular program returned in March 2012, under the aegis of MTA Arts & Design. The revived program displays two new poems each quarter.

To learn more about MTA Arts & Design program, visit <http://web.mta.info/mta/aft/about/>

To learn more about the Poetry Society of America, visit <https://poetrysociety.org/>