

**TAMEKA CAGE CONLEY**

*“Some will come to Tameka Cage Conley and know the joy of a fresh literary discovery: she writes exactly like the hybrid novelist-dramatist-archivist-anthropologist-scholar-poet she is...When immersed in the landscapes of [her] language, we come to know the miles-long, miles-deep roots that bear such blossoming.” —Terrance Hayes*

**Tameka Cage Conley is a literary artist and creative intellectual who writes fiction, poetry, plays, essays, and librettos. She was born in post-Jim Crow Shreveport, Louisiana and reared by a tightly knit matriarchal family led by her great-grandmother who told stories about injustice and resistance – these stories inform the commitment to social justice in her literary craft.**

Tameka has lived all over Louisiana as well as in Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Georgia, where she now resides. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop where she was awarded the Truman Capote Fellowship and the Provost Postgraduate Visiting Writer Fellowship in Fiction. She has received writing fellowships from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, the Cave Canem Foundation, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Squaw Valley Community of Writers, the Vermont Studio Center, and in 2013, The Pittsburgh Foundation awarded her its annual Eben Demarest grant award, previously awarded to Jackson Pollock and Kyle Abraham.

In 2019, the opera for which Tameka wrote the libretto, *A Gathering of Sons*, was awarded the Bronze Medal in the Society and Social Issues category of the New York Festivals TV and Film Awards. She has been commissioned twice by the Stanley Museum of Art for work in response to renowned African American sculptor and graphic artist, Elizabeth Catlett, and she was also commissioned by the Avisca Fine Art Gallery to write an essay exploring selective paintings by Ann Tanksley as inspired by the work of Zora Neale Hurston. Tameka is a two-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize in poetry and fiction, and her poem dedicated to Prince Rogers Nelson, “Because They Was Purple,” was nominated for the Best of the Net Prize.

Tameka received her PhD from Louisiana State University, where she was a recipient of the Huel Perkins Doctoral Fellowship and recipient of the Lewis Simpson Distinguished Dissertation Award for her dissertation, “Painful Discourses: Borders, Regions, and Representations of Female Circumcision from Africa to America.” An Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing at Oxford College of Emory University, Tameka produces a distinguished conversation series. She is at work on her first novel, *You, Your Father* – an epic family saga that considers the untimely deaths of African American men over six decades, beginning in the early 1940s in Shreveport.