



## NATHAN RICHARDSON

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### Poetry Spotlight

Black History Month 2022

#### 1. In what ways do you work with your communities?

I have hosted one of the longest continuously running open mic events in Virginia. Since 2000, the *Poetry, Prose & Pizza Open Mic* has provided a safe space for poets of all ages and levels of development to read and showcase their work. After initial success in Chesapeake at the Russell Memorial Library, it expanded with additional events held quarterly in Suffolk and Prince George, Virginia. The goal of this project has always been to bring the local community of poets and writers together supported by a local pizza establishment providing the pizza. During the event writers learn about workshops, conferences, and organizations like the Poetry Society of Virginia, which are essential to their growth and success.

#### 2. What is your most recent publication/project/performance?

My most recent publication is the chapbook [\*The 7 Last Poems of an Unarmed Citizen\*](#).

I currently have three books in the works: a new full collection of poems [\*Voices from the Wombs of Wisdom\*](#), a children's book, *The Asphalt Bites Harder than a Dog*; and a memoir entitled *Becoming Douglass*. The memoir will chronicle my journey over the last decade in the role of interpreting the life of former slave, turned writer, orator, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

I'm also happy to announce that my poetry residency *Artistic Verses* (teaching Ekphrastic Poetry) which ran for many years at the *Peninsula Fine Arts Center*, is being revived this spring with the support of the *Suffolk Art League* and Suffolk Public and Private schools. You can read more at my website and on Facebook and Instagram at #frederickdouglasslive

#### 3. Please name 1-3 books or works by Black poets/writers that you consider essential reading especially during these times that we are experiencing.

My heritage certainly influences who I read. I am Haliwa Saponi Indian, African American, and Irish. I have read and would recommend:

[\*Crazy Brave\*](#) by Joy Harjo

[\*Fast Animal\*](#) by Tim Seibles

[\*100 Poems\*](#) by Seamus Heaney