

UC San Diego

ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Theatre and Dance

PRESS RELEASE

May 25, 2017

Contact: Mark Maltby, 858-822-3152; mmaltby@ucsd.edu

UC SAN DIEGO, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE—The UC San Diego Department of Theatre and Dance is pleased to announce the winner of the 2017 Dr. Floyd Gaffney National Playwriting Competition, *ain't no dead thing*, by a.k. payne. payne will be awarded a \$1000 prize, and his play will receive a staged reading on Saturday, June 3 at 2pm, at the Theodore and Adele Shank Theatre in the [Joan and Irwin Jacobs Theatre District](#) on UC San Diego's campus: 2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA.

The Dr. Floyd Gaffney National Playwriting Competition on the African American Experience is open to enrolled full time undergraduate students throughout the country. The Gaffney Prize, now in its eleventh year, awards \$1000 to the winning author along with travel and lodging to participate in the play's staged reading Saturday, June 3, 2017 as a follow up to the Wagner MFA New Play Festival at UC San Diego. Jurors for this year's award are La Jolla Playhouse Dramaturg Shirley Fishman, incoming MFA playwright Dave Harris, and Allan Havis, professor of theatre at UC San Diego. The Theatre & Dance Department wishes to thank the work of the jurors, the Dean of Arts and Humanities, and the Gaffney family for lending Dr. Floyd Gaffney's name to this national event—recognizing Dr. Gaffney's achievement in African American theatre.

In *ain't no dead thing*, on the morning of May 31, 1921, Edwina kills the chicken that led Noa on her amazing 300 mile journey from Chicago to Tulsa after her son was found at the bottom of Lake Michigan in 1905. Later that night, a gun goes off, leading to the massacre that destroyed one of the economic beacons of Black America. Two pairs of forbidden lovers try to imagine a world where they can breathe. Playwright a.k. payne is a student at Yale University.

Recipients of Honorable Mention in this year's competition are:

***Short Rib*, by Alcindor Leadon (Yale University)**

Short Rib follows the Ramseys, an affluent Black family stunned by an unidentifiable illness that has befallen eldest son Seth, a former journalist. Destitute, Seth moves into the apartment of his two brothers: Able, a videogame engineer, and Kane, a model flirting with a writing career. The three bachelors fall into a rut, until their mother plans a surprise birthday party that shatters the family's inner world.

***Take Me Home*, by Alexander Philip Browne (Columbia University)**

Bear and Red, running away from home and on the streets of rural town New Hampshire find their way to McDonalds. At the drive-thru window, things go badly and the manager pulls a gun on the children. The consequences escalate tragically.

***Waiting for Superman* by Drewcella Oya Mae Davis (Augsburg College)**

Four brothers wait at a bus stop. The youngest brother Kendrick reveres their father - known as *Superman* – but they've never met him. The brothers also wait for Kendrick to die. Kendrick has been infected with a disease that was planted by white people and only infects blacks in segregated neighborhoods.

The staged reading of *ain't no dead thing* will take place on Saturday, June 3 at 2pm. Tickets are free and can be reserved online or by calling the box office at (858) 534-4574. For information about parking, please see the website.

###