FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MDC’s Miami Book Fair and National Poetry Series Announce**

**2018 Paz Prize for Poetry Winner**

**MIAMI BOOK FAIR Nov. 11 – 18, 2018**

***Presented and produced by Miami Dade College***

**Miami, August 7, 2018** – **Miami Dade College**’s (MDC) acclaimed **Miami Book Fair**, in collaboration with the **National Poetry Series**, is pleased to announce the 2018 Paz Prize for Poetry winner, Puerto Rican poet **Johanny Vazquez Paz** for her manuscript ***Ofrezco mi corazón como una diana*.** The book, selected by judge Rigoberto Gonzalez, will be published in both English and Spanish by Akashic Books.

“This collection of poems, strong and seductive, centers on the bewilderment created by the body, memory and history,” **Gonzalez said**. “By visiting these sacred spaces, Johanny Vazquez Paz offers solace for the conflicts that plague our interior and exterior sceneries. As violence diminishes the female spirit, this poet’s courageous, masterful command of language reunites fragments to make something whole.”

Paz was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Her books include *Sagrada Familia*, which won an International Latino Book Award in 2015; Querido Voyeur by Ediciones Torremozas (Madrid, Spain, 2012) and Streetwise Poems/Poemas callejeros (Mayapple Press, 2007), a winner at the 2008 International Latino Book Awards (California). In 2012, she won first prize in the poetry category and second place for her story “La muda” (The Mute) at the Consenso Short Story and Poetry Contest of Northeastern Illinois University. She co-edited the anthology Between the Heart and the Land / Entre el corazón y la tierra: Latina Poets in the Midwest (Abrazo Press). Her work has been included in many anthologies, including City of Big Shoulders; Ejército de rosas; En la 18 a la 1; The City Visible: Chicago Poetry for the New Century; and Poetas sin tregua - *Compilación de poetas puertorriqueñas de la generación del 80*. She currently teaches at Harold Washington College in Chicago, IL.

“It is an honor to receive the Paz Prize for Poetry and become the first Puerto Rican to obtain this distinction,” **Paz said**. “It’s also very special to receive a prize that carries my mother’s last name. With *Ofrezco mi corazón como una diana*, I hope to give a voice to the Puerto Rican diáspora and offer consolation to the victims and survivors of the violence we live in today. I’d like to thank Rigoberto Gonzalez for trusting my poems, the Natonal Poetry Series and Miami Book Fair for promoting and supporting Spanish-language authors in the U.S.”

Named in honor of the late Nobel Prize-winning poet, Octavio Paz, the Paz Prize for Poetry was launched in 2012 and recognizes a previously unpublished poetry book written in Spanish by a poet residing in the U.S. Past winners include Dinapiera Di Donato, Carlos Pintado and Legna Rodriguez Iglesias. More than 200 poets have submitted works for the Paz Prize in Poetry.

“It is intensely gratifying to be able to introduce a broad spectrum of poetic voices through the Paz Prize,” said **Lissette Mendez**, Miami Book Fair’s director of programming. “These poems are available in both English and Spanish, and it is fascinating to experience their unique cadence in both languages. Discovering a new poet, who might have gone unnoticed due to language barriers, is even more marvelous. There aren’t many books that offer this unique translation.”

**The National Poetry Series** was established in 1978 by Daniel Halpern and James Michener to ensure the publication of five collections of poetry annually through participating publishers. More than 175 books have been awarded since the Series' inception. Board members include Julia Alvarez, Sandra Cisneros, Cristina Garcia, Mitchell Kaplan, Campbell McGrath, Pablo Medina, Gary Soto, Ilan Stavans, and Luisa Valenzuela.

**Miami Book Fair**

Widely recognized as the largest and finest literary gathering in the U.S., the Miami Book Fair’s eight-day festival features readings and conversation with the world’s most renowned authors and more than 200 booksellers and exhibitors across various genres and interests. Book lovers are also treated to culinary presentations, live music, dance and theater performances, interactive art projects, fun and educational activities for children, and more! In addition to the annual festival, the Miami Book Fair builds community and promotes reading and writing throughout the year with activities open to all, including creative writing courses taught by local and visiting authors, literary gatherings and happy hours and Read to Learn Books for Free, a partnership with The Children’s Trust that distributes more than 160,000 free books a year to children in Miami-Dade County.

Miami Book Fair is made possible through the generous support of the State of Florida and the National Endowment for the Arts; the City of Miami; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; Miami-Dade County Public Schools; the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau; the Miami Downtown Development; and the Friends of the Fair; as well as many corporate partners. Miami Book Fair: Building community, one reader at a time.

**About Miami Dade College**

Miami Dade College is the nation’s largest, campus-based institution of higher education with an undergraduate enrollment of 165,000 students. It is also the nation’s top producer of Associate in Arts and Science degrees and awards more degrees to minorities than any other college or university in the country. The college’s eight campuses offer more than 300 distinct degree pathways including several baccalaureate degrees in biological sciences, engineering, data analytics, information systems technology, education, public safety, supervision and management, nursing, physician assistant studies, film and others.  MDC is the recipient of top national awards. As Democracy’s College, MDC changes lives through accessible, high quality-teaching and learning experiences.  It houses the Miami Culinary Institute, the Miami Animation & Gaming International Complex, the Miami Fashion Institute, the Eig-Watson School of Aviation, the Idea Center, the School of Advance Studies, the New World School of the Arts, to name a few.  MDC has been named among the nation’s “Great Colleges to Work For” by *The Chronicle of Higher Education.*The College embraces its responsibility to serve as an economic, cultural, and civic leader for the advancement of our diverse global community. Its alumni and employees contribute more than $6 billion annually to the local economy, and MDC graduates occupy top leadership positions in every major industry.   MDC is also renowned for its rich cultural programming. It is home of the Miami Book Fair, Miami Film Festival, the *MDC Live!* Performing Arts Series, the National Historic Landmark Miami Freedom Tower, the Tower Theater, Dyer Building, Koubek Center Mansion and Gardens, the Lynn and Louis Wolfson II Florida Moving Image Archives, a sculpture park and a large art gallery system.  MDC has admitted more than 2,000,000 students and counting, since it opened its doors in 1960. For more information, visit [www.mdc.edu](http://www.mdc.edu).

**For Miami Book Fair updates, please** visit [www.miamibookfair.com](http://www.miamibookfair.com), call 305-237-3528 or email [wbookfair@mdc.edu](mailto:wbookfair@mdc.edu).

**Find Miami Book Fair at:**

<https://twitter.com/miamibookfair>

<https://www.facebook.com/MiamiBookFair>

<http://instagram.com/miamibookfair>

**#MiamiReads, #MiamiBookFair2016**

**Miami Book Fair contact:** Lisa Palley, 305-642-3132 [lpalley@bellsouth.net](mailto:lpalley@bellsouth.net) or Deyanira Navarrette, 305-495-7168, [deyanavarrette@gmail.co](mailto:deyanavarrette@gmail.com)m.

**Media-only contacts:** Juan C. Mendieta, MDC director of communications, 305-237-7611, [jmendiet@mdc.edu](mailto:jmendiet@mdc.edu); Hessy Fernandez, director of media relations, 305-237-3949, [hfernan5@mdc.edu](mailto:hfernan5@mdc.edu); Sue Arrowsmith, 305-237-3710, [sue.arrowsmith@mdc.edu](mailto:sue.arrowsmith@mdc.edu); and Allison Horton, 305-237-3359, [ahorton2@mdc.edu](mailto:ahorton2@mdc.edu).