

GREEN-WOOD

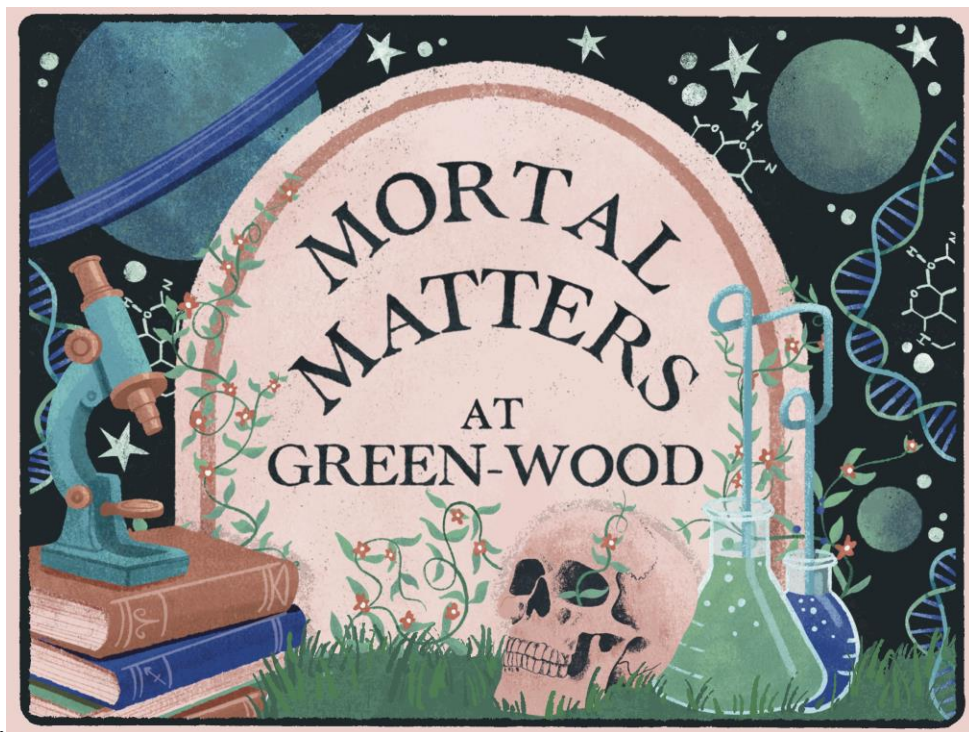
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact:

Daniela Ochoa-Bravo, dochoabravo@green-wood.com

MORTAL MATTERS AT GREEN-WOOD: WHERE DEATH IS THE SUBJECT AND EVERYONE IS INVITED

Mortal Matters, a free weekend-long event, where you can join scientists, artists, and deathcare professionals to explore every aspect of our mortality, the scientific, cultural, and the cosmic



BROOKLYN, N.Y. [September 10, 2026] — In the span of one weekend, New Yorkers can contemplate the death of the universe with an astrophysicist, learn how a human body can become earth, enter a working crematory, dive into the science of embalming with a mortician, and participate in “Grief Karaoke” inside a nineteenth-century cemetery chapel.

It is all part of **Mortal Matters**, a free three-day event at **The Green-Wood Cemetery**, from **September 18th through 20th**. The program brings together scientists, funeral professionals,

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writers, and artists, including award-winning novelist, **Edwidge Danticat**, forensic entomologist **Dr. Jennifer Rosati**, artists **Janine Antoni**, **Eiko Otake**, **Jean Shin**, author **Joanna Ebenstein**, astrophysicist **Dr. Moiya McTier**, mortician and deathcare expert **Amanda King**, and others, to examine death as a physical process, a profession, a cultural practice, and an enduring subject of human inquiry.

People who spend their careers thinking about death rarely approach it from the same direction. Forensic scientists read the changes that occur in a body after death. Funeral professionals care for, and prepare, the dead. Astrophysicists study the collapse of stars and the ultimate fate of the universe. Writers and artists contend with grief, memory, ritual, and what remains. What happens when those perspectives sit side by side? *Mortal Matters* brings them together over three days of conversations, demonstrations, tours, readings, and participatory programs.

“Scientists, artists, and funeral professionals ponder deep questions of mortality yet rarely share a stage,” said **Meera Joshi, President of Green-Wood**. “Green-Wood’s weekend of *Mortal Matters* brings them together in a place where, since 1838 and for our forever future, death is and will always be part of our daily work.”

“We prepare for so many major moments in life, but death is usually something people figure out only once it’s already urgent. Understanding what happens to our bodies, the choices available to us, and how grief works isn’t morbid, it’s practical and empowering. Green-Wood’s *Mortal Matters* event gives people a chance to ask those questions before they’re in crisis, not during one,” said **Gabrielle Gatto, Green-Wood’s Manager of Programs and curator of its Death Education programming**.

Over three days, attendees can learn from forensic scientists what happens to the body after death, tour Green-Wood’s working crematory, learn about embalming and post-mortem restoration, and see how Natural Organic Reduction transforms a body into earth. Astrophysicists will consider the death of stars and the universe, while writers, musicians, and artists examine grief, memory, ritual, and what remains.

Mortal Matters is the second of two weekend-long events at The Green-Wood Cemetery funded by Simons Foundation International and administered by the Simons Foundation’s Science, Society & Culture division, which creates opportunities for people to forge connections with science.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, September 18th:

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Grief Karaoke (6–9pm, The Historic Chapel): Artist **Leigh Davis** invites visitors to listen, dance, sing, or simply gather inside Green-Wood's Historic Chapel, using karaoke as a communal outlet for grief.

Rest in Pace: Twilight Edition (6:30–7:30pm, Meets under the Arch, near the Cemetery's Main Entrance): Join a walking tour through the Cemetery and learn stories of scientists and inventors laid to rest at Green-Wood.

What the Body Remembers (6:30–7:30pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Artist **Janine Antoni**, forensic anthropologist **Angelique Corthals**, and Morbid Anatomy founder **Joanna Ebenstein** consider what experience, memory, and loss can leave behind in the body.

What Survives (8–9pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Artists **Laura Anderson Barbata**, **Cinthya Santos Briones**, and **Mary Ting** examine how knowledge and memory are carried through ritual, storytelling, migration, and cultural change.

Saturday, September 19th:

Potential Ends of the Universe (11:30am–12:30pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Astrophysicist and folklorist **Dr. Moiya McTier** explains the physics behind leading theories for how the universe may ultimately end, from the Big Crunch to the Big Rip.

Written Into Memory: A Reading and Conversation with Edwidge Danticat (1–2pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Acclaimed author **Edwidge Danticat** reads from her new novel, *Dèy*, and joins physicist **LaToya Anderson** for a conversation about mourning, matter, remembrance, and storytelling.

Echoes & Epitaphs (1–5pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Classroom): Green-Wood Artist in Residence **Jia Sung** leads a participatory art project inviting visitors to consider memory, inheritance, and the legacies they will leave behind.

Our Brain on Dying (2:30–3:30pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Astrophysicist and folklorist **Dr. Moiya McTier** brings together experts to examine the biology of grief and what happens in the brain and body as people encounter loss and approach the end of life.

Dancing With Death: The Science Behind Movement (4–5pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Physicist and dancer **LaToya Anderson** and interdisciplinary artist **Eiko**

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Otake explore movement as a shared language between scientific observation and artistic practice.

Grieving & Weaving (4–7pm, The Modern Chapel): An open gathering for crafting and conversation includes a 5pm reading by bestselling author **Bruce Feiler** from his new book, *A Time to Gather*, which includes stories from Green-Wood's Grieving & Weaving program.

Sunday, September 20th:

Deathcare Done Differently (10:15–11:15am and 11:30am–12:30pm, meets under the Arch, near the Cemetery's Main Entrance): A Green-Wood trolley tour traces the evolution of American deathcare through medicine, war, embalming, burial practices, and memorialization.

What the Corpse Can Tell Us (11:30am–12:30pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Forensic entomologist **Dr. Jennifer Rosati** and fellow scientists examine the biology of human decomposition, the succession of insects after death, and what those organisms can reveal to forensic investigators.

All Ends Are Beginnings (1–2pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Astrophysicist **Shyam Menon** of the Flatiron Institute, **Pablo Metz**, co-founder of Meine Erde, and artist **Jean Shin** consider what dying stars, human bodies, and discarded objects leave behind and how matter takes on new forms.

Zinkie Design with Greedy Peasant (1–5pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Classroom): Visitors can join artist and performer **Greedy Peasant** to design their own paper versions of Green-Wood's cast-zinc monuments, then use a custom map to find surviving examples throughout the Cemetery.

Terramation at Green-Wood & Beyond (2:30–3:30pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): **Pablo Metz**, Green-Wood Vice President of Landscape **Joe Charap**, and cemetery consultant **Stephanie Sloane** explain the biology, ecology, and practical realities of Natural Organic Reduction, including a live demonstration of a Terramation pod.

Death by Design: Science, Restoration, and Ritual (2:30–3:30pm, The Modern Chapel): Frigid Fluid, funeral celebrant **Jennifer Muldowney**, and funeral director and post-mortem restorative specialist **Amanda King** examine embalming chemistry, restorative work, and the skill involved in preparing a body for burial.

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The Past, Present, and Future of the Grave (3–4:30pm, meets under the Arch, near the Cemetery’s Main Entrance): Author and longtime Green-Wood guide **Allison C. Meier** traces changing approaches to interment and memorialization, from embalming and cremation to green burial, Natural Organic Reduction, and other emerging practices.

Biology on Tap (4–5pm, The Green-House at Green-Wood, Atrium): Scientists and anthropologists examine what physically happens to a body after death and how cultures around the world understand and respond to those processes.

Across Cultures: Our Shared History of Goodbye (4–5pm, The Modern Chapel): Representatives from New York’s international communities discuss the funeral traditions, gatherings, food, music, memorial objects, and rituals that shape how people mourn and remember the dead.

EVENT DETAILS

Mortal Matters

September 18–20, 2026

The Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York

Free and open to the public.

To learn more and to register for a specific program, please visit green-wood.com/mortal-matters. Or just drop by; our gates are always open.

Registration and capacity vary by program.

ABOUT THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY

Established in 1838, The Green-Wood Cemetery, a National Historic Landmark, is recognized as one of the world's most beautiful cemeteries. As the permanent residence of over 580,000 individuals, Green-Wood's magnificent grounds, grand architecture, and world-class statuary have made it a destination for half a million visitors annually, including national and international tourists, New Yorkers, and Brooklynites. At the same time, Green-Wood is also an outdoor museum, an arboretum, and a repository of history. Throughout the year, it offers innovative programs in arts and culture, nature and the environment, education, workforce development, restoration, and research, as well as bold initiatives in climate resiliency and sustainability. For more information, please visit green-wood.com.

ABOUT SIMONS FOUNDATION AND SIMONS FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

This program is funded by Simons Foundation International and administered by the Simons Foundation’s Science, Society & Culture division.

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Simons Foundation International (SFI) is a philanthropy whose mission is to advance the frontiers of research in mathematics and the basic sciences. The Simons Foundation's mission is to advance the frontiers of research in mathematics and the basic sciences. Since its founding in 1994 by Jim and Marilyn Simons, the foundation has been a champion of basic science through grant funding, support for research and public engagement. We believe in asking big questions and providing sustained support to researchers working to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Through our work we make space for scientific discovery.

The Simons Foundation's Science, Society & Culture division seeks to provide opportunities for people to forge a connection to science — whether for the first time or a lifetime. Through our initiatives, we work to inspire a feeling of awe and wonder, foster connections between people and science and support environments that provide a sense of belonging.