

CRYSTAL SIMONE SMITH

LONG BIO

Born 1973 in Takoma Park, Maryland, Crystal Simone Smith received a Masters of Fine Arts from Queens University of Charlotte. She is the author of three chapbooks of poetry, *Down To Earth*, (Longleaf Press, 2021), *Running Music* (Longleaf Press, 2014) and *Routes Home* (Finishing Line Press, 2013). Smith was a scholarship participant at the Napa Valley Writer's Conference and is an alumnus of the Yale Summer Writers Conference and the Callaloo Writer's Workshop. She is an Assistant Professor of English and has taught courses at Elon University, William Peace University, and Duke University. She is the recipient of a Duke Humanities Unbounded Fellowship, 2020.

Smith is also the author of *Dark Testament* (Henry Holt, 2023), a collection of blackout poems about Black Lives Matter derived from the novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders. *Dark Testament* embarks on an uncompromising exploration of collective mourning of lives taken unjustly and too soon.

Her work has been widely published in journals including: *Prairie Schooner*, *Callaloo*, *Nimrod*, *African-American Review*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *POETRY Magazine* and anthologized in numerous poetry collections.

Smith is the Founder and Managing Editor of Backbone Press Inc., which publishes emerging & established poets with a focus on publishing and advancing the voices of writers of color.

AWARDS & HONORS:

In 2015, Crystal Simone Smith was the first recipient of the Ashber Initiatives Literary Grant, which funded *Wildflowers: Haiku, Senryu, and Haiga* (2016), a limited edition, letterpress book of traditional Japanese poetry and art.

Her poem "Plantation Tour" took 2nd place in NCPS Griffin-Farlow Haiku Award in 2014 and her poem "Slave Museum" won 1st place in the NCPS Bloodroot Haiku Award in 2019. Smith's co-authored *One Window's Light: A Collection of Haiku* (Unicorn Press, 2017), edited by Lenard D. Moore was awarded the 1st Place Merit Book Award for best haiku anthology by the Haiku Society of America.

In 2022, her collection of haiku, *Ebbing Shore*, (Horse & Buggy Press, 2022) was awarded the Haiku Foundation's Touchstone Distinguished Book Award.

Other selected poems of Smith's have been named either Finalist or Honorable Mention in the 2012 Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Prize, the 2017 Pablo Neruda Poetry Prize, and the 2018 James Applewhite Poetry Award.

She also serves on the editorial board of *Juxtaposition: The Journal of Haiku Research and Scholarship*.