



## Preston Smith

**Q. Tell us a little about yourself and where your work is published**

A: I was born in Dayton, Ohio, but was raised and attended university in two different cities named Bowling Green - the former in Kentucky and the latter in Ohio. I graduated with a Bachelor's in English Literature from Bowling Green State University in May 2019 and have just begun a Master's Degree program in English at Wright State University in August. I would love to eventually participate in an MFA program as well. Some of my poetry appears in *Black Bough*, *Pink Plastic House* a tiny journal, *Brave Voices Magazine*, *Nightingale & Sparrow*, and a few others.

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**Q. How long have you been writing poetry and how did you start?**

A: I have only been writing poetry seriously for about two and a half years now maybe. I originally fell in love with poetry while interning with the literary journal *Mid-American Review*. After that, I began dabbling but hating what I was writing. Then, after some time, I began really practicing and revising, but I still very much feel like a newbie and often inferior. Having said that, I am eternally grateful to the creative writing students and faculty at Bowling Green State University who welcomed with open arms this literature student into their group. Without them, I would never be here.

**Q. What poets are your favourites and what was the last collection you read?**

A: K. Weber, Venus Davis, and Kristin Garth are who I've been absolutely adoring. K. is an amazing writer, and we

Preston Smith is a poet from Ohio who attends Wright State University. He was asked to be a guest reader for the Black Bough Poetry Christmas and winter festival edition. We caught up with Preston.

recently found out in the strangest way that we graduated from the same high school! It was the most bizarre experience because we met through the Internet and the writing community - and surprise! We're from the same community! I adore Venus for a similar reason, except with them, I feel like we instantly clicked because we're at similar stages in our writing careers. We relate to each other so much and the relationship I've forged with them makes me so happy.

Finally, Kristin is actually the author of the most recent collection I've read. I've been exploring her new book *Shut Your Eyes, Succubi*, which is brilliant in so many ways. The perfect book for the season!

“Practice writing that haunts, illuminates, lingers due to its images.”

**Q. You have recently joined Black Bough Poetry as a guest reader, what drew you to the publication?**

A: I first heard of *Black Bough Poetry* when submissions were opening for its second issue—the Apollo/space issue. I happened to be working on a pseudo space-themed chapbook manuscript at the time, so I submitted on a whim. I was met with such warm feedback on my writing, which not only helped build my confidence but also made me adore this publication even more. It's easy to say that the journal is for new and seasoned writers alike, but *Black Bough Poetry* lives wholeheartedly by that sort of mission statement, if you will, which is another reason why I wanted to apply to be a guest reader for this special winter issue!

**Q. Any tips you can give poets wishing to be published by Black Bough?**

A: I think I have 2 major tips here: Don't be scared, and write evocatively as much as possible. The first tip sounds like a cliché—and it is—but I am serious. Matthew and everyone that works with *Black Bough Poetry* are warm and welcoming and spend so much time with writers' words. Per my second tip, part of this journal's appeal is its focus on the image, on the reminiscence of images.

Practice writing that haunts, illuminates, lingers due to its images. Mostly, though: just submit. Take that leap with us.