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- **Meet Conference on Poetry and Teaching Faculty Marcus Jackson**
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Meet Conference on Poetry and Teaching Faculty Marcus Jackson

Marcus Jackson was born in Toledo, Ohio. His poems have appeared in such publications as *The American Poetry Review*, *Harvard Review*, and *The New Yorker*. His first collection of poetry, *Neighborhood Register*, was released in 2011. He lives with his wife



and son in Columbus, Ohio, where he teaches at Capital University.

Marcus Jackson on the Poetry Workshop

Since the bulk of a poetry workshop involves focusing closely on one poem at a time, it is important to remind students how continuous and demanding the journeys toward writing our best poems are. Especially in the case of twenty-something MFA students, a two-year or five-year plan for reaching their poetry peaks may exist in their minds' eyes. Such time-tables breed impatience, poetic sloppiness, and emotional volatility, all of which will hurt their growth as writers. Thus, I tell students not to picture the successful poet as a 30-year-old who grins from a photo taken at the National Book Awards Ceremony. Instead, I implore students to imagine the successful poet as someone much older and more worn, someone who still wakes each morning and drags, for the 10,000th time, back to the desk where the poems are made, sighing because the chance for failure still terrifies, and the odds at getting the language exactly right are still arduous. If the members of a workshop can come to view the writing life as an unremitting acceptance of hardship and slowly earned, modest advancements, they will enable themselves the time and fortitude that crafting crucial poems requires.

In summary, poetry workshops should promote and pass along the characteristics and perspectives that prepare their members for what may wait on the other sides of classroom walls. The progress made within such workshops will endure long past the final days of class, and, hopefully, long past the moments the students finish their college careers. After graduation, the students' poetic pursuits will probably become more lonely, baffling, and painful. However, those who have partaken in fruitful workshops will carry with them the encouragement, conviction, revision strategies, and lively ideas

that were fostered in those spaces.

KISS

by Marcus Jackson

Saving money the summer
before moving to New York,
I painted houses during days,
nights in a restaurant kitchen
hosing dishes, loading them
into a steel washer that gusted
steam until two a.m.
Once, when I came home,
my back and neck bidding for bed,
asleep on the couch laid dad.
Flicker from muted TV
was the room's lone light,
but I could see his face fine,
broad nose, thick cheeks
holding glow as he breathed.
In five hours I would wake,
ride in the crew truck
to the assigned site,
gallon buckets and stepladders
chattering over road bumps,
axels clanging
like prongs of a struck fork.
Still, I stood and stared
at dad, a man
who poured four years
into the Navy during war,
who worked worse
jobs for shorter pay than me,
whose hands have blackened
fixing cars that quit
no matter how many replaced parts.
Above our house, clouds

polished moon as they passed.
Dad wriggled,
body pain or threatening dreams.
What else could I do
but bend down slow
and touch once
my lips to his brown brow?



Spend your summer at The Frost Place
studying and writing poetry.

Come and be inspired.

- **The Frost Place Conference on Poetry and Teaching - June 21 - 25, 2015**
- **The Frost Place Conference on Poetry - July 12 - 18, 2015**
- **The Frost Place Poetry Seminar - August 2 - 8, 2015**

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