

ASHLEY M. JONES

“Ashley M. Jones is a genius in how she wields, innovates, and wades through a bounty of poetic forms (sonnets, an aubade, a ghazal, a contrapuntal, anaphora, the subjunctive mode and so much more) with a sense of mastery, levity, and play.” —Tiana Clark

As the first person of color and the youngest person to hold the position of Poet Laureate of Alabama in its 93 year existence, Ashley M. Jones is passionate about telling the truth and breaking barriers with an eye toward empathy.

Ashley was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and her work focuses on her Black Southern identity and the ways in which the South plays a vital role in understanding the triumphs and errors of this nation. She holds an MFA in Poetry from Florida International University, where she was a John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Fellow. In 2021, she served as a guest editor of *POETRY Magazine*, and in 2022, she received a Poet Laureate Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets. Ashley and her work have been featured at CNN, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, Good Morning America, BBC, ABC News, *The Rumpus*, *The Oxford American*, *The Bitter Southerner*, *POETRY*, and other outlets.

She has received fellowships and awards from organizations including the Academy of American Poets, the Rona Jaffe Foundation, Hedgebrook, and The Independent Publishers Book Awards. Ashley’s debut poetry collection, *Magic City Gospel*, won the silver medal in poetry in the 2017 Independent Publishers Book Awards. Her second book, *dark // thing*, won the 2018 Lena-Miles Wever Todd Prize for Poetry from Pleiades Press, and her third poetry collection, *REPARATIONS NOW!* was on the longlist for the 2022 PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry. She is also the co-editor of *WHAT THINGS COST: An Anthology for the People*.

A dedicated educator and community servant, Ashley currently lives in Birmingham, Alabama, where she is Associate Director of the University Honors Program at UAB, founding director of the Magic City Poetry Festival, board member of the Alabama Writers Cooperative and the Alabama Writers Forum.