



Border Arts Network Artist Spotlight

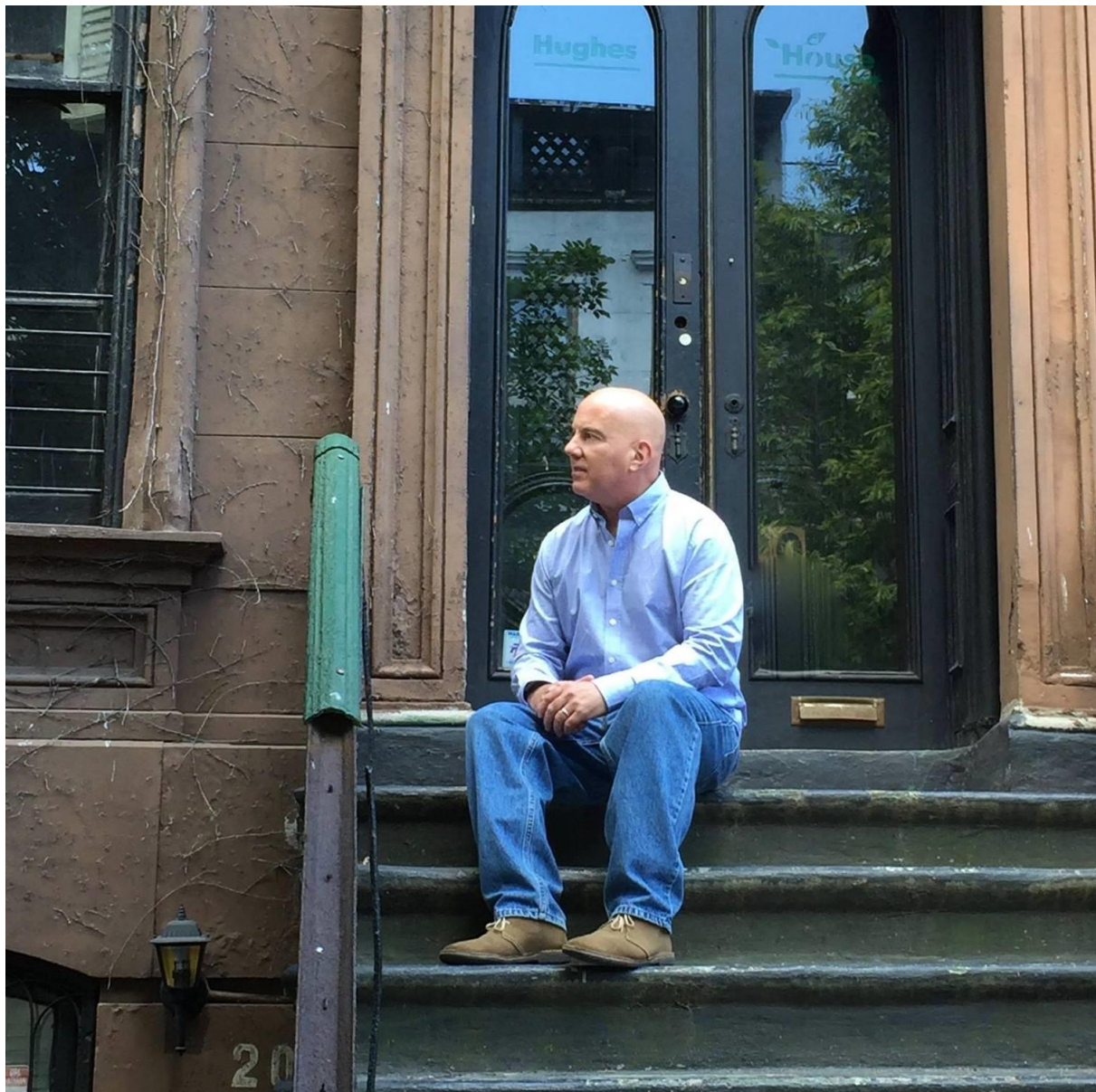
Telling the stories of the Border.

Name Joseph Ross

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State:
Maryland

City: Silver Spring



Bio

Joseph Ross is the author of five books of poetry: *Crushed & Crowned* (forthcoming, 2023), *Raising King* (2020), *Ache* (2017), *Gospel of Dust* (2013) and *Meeting Bone Man* (2012). His poems appear in many publications including, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Poet Lore*, *Drumvoices Revue*, *The Langston Hughes Review*, and the 2022 anthology, *WHERE WE STAND: Poems of Black Resilience*. He has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations and won the 2012 Pratt Library / Little Patuxent Review Poetry Prize for his poem "If Mamie Till Was the Mother of God." Recently, Ross served as judge for the 2021 Ken Ebert Poetry Prize from Iris G. Press. He currently serves on the Poetry Board at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. where he teaches English and Creative Writing. Ross writes regularly at www.JosephRoss.net.

Interview

1) *How does your home state influence your art?*

I grew up in Southern California and I now live in the Washington, DC area, where there are people from every country in the world. These experiences teach me the fragility of our humanity and the foolishness of borders.

2) *What inspires you to create?*

The beauties and sorrows of humanity inspire me to create, to write poems.

3) *What is your art? Literary? Music? Drawing, painting, sketching? Photography? Film? Or other?*

I am a poet.

4) *Which creators influence you?*

I have been inspired by many poets including Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, Randall Horton, Lucille Clifton, and Martin Espada.

5) *How is your art (or art in general) important to society in the border states??*

Where people live with injustice and divisions, art always serves a crucial role in naming and healing those realities.

6) *Is there a specific purpose for your art?*

I hope that the purpose of my poems is to move people to imagine and build a more just and peaceful world.

7) *Are there other artists that you collaborate with, network, or recommend?*

I am always moved by the work of Randall Horton, Martin Espada, Sarah Browning, and Le Hinton.

8) *Do you have a "real" job or is your creative work your fulltime gig?*

While all my work is real, I also work as a teacher. I teach American Literature and poetry writing in a high school in Washington, D.C.

9) *Do you collaborate with other artists/creators?*

Yes, I love to collaborate with other artists!

10) *Tell us about an upcoming project you are working on currently?*

I am currently finalizing my fifth book of poems, *Crushed & Crowned*. It will come out from FlowerSong Press. Its poems explore the move from suffering to healing in a wide variety of contexts.

Additional info:

You can learn more about my work at www.JosephRoss.net . The "About" page includes my artist's statement, exploring the role of poetry to console and confront. I hope you will take a look!