Roger Reeves’s powerful debut collection, *King Me*, examines the eroticism of language and the complexities of relationships with a timeless voice, one that holds its own among poetry’s greats. With fierce skill and exacting word-craft, *King Me* is a fiery investigation of how violence, poverty, and race fuel the intensities of loss, and how love can recover the traumatized body.

And then, the clawed feet of something akin to speech crawling across the half-moon of my lip. I, red beetle and buzzed, come crawling into bed tonight looking for the last light of this evening’s rage in your hair. God, how long the night trapped in the bottom of a bottle thrown into a sewer or lodged in a man’s dark hand? I am still holding the bird I wrestled from the street lamp of your anger. It is pecking at my palm. I cover its mouth and the avalanche in its throat when I come into the house so as not to wake you. The fountain, in the square, is still broke. It leaks like a man. I’ve said this before: I come as the children came before the closed door of Noah’s ark: to plead for water. To beg you stay.

—“Wave Before Leaving, Wave”

**Praise for KING ME**

“Adorned with a Basquiat painting on the cover, Reeves’s collection is a beautiful and thought-provoking look at race, identity, the South, and Christianity. Heavily influenced by pop culture and the Western canon—from Wu Tang and Mike Tyson to Keats and Neruda—these playful poems are shaped by recurring characters, including Jesus, and a fascination with herons. Reeves’ meaningful poems are smart...”

—Booklist

“As a poet, Reeves clearly has chops, and when he hits, he hits hard, his lines producing oddly beautiful music.”—Library Journal

**ROGER REEVES**'s poems have appeared in *Poetry, American Poetry Review, Boston Review*, and *Tin House*. He was awarded a Ruth Lilly Fellowship by the Poetry Foundation in 2008, two Bread Loaf Scholarships, an Alberta H. Walker Scholarship from the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center, and two Cave Canem Fellowships. Earning a B.A. in English from Morehouse College, an M.A. in English from Texas A&M University, recently he earned his MFA from the James A. Michener Center for Creative Writing at the University of Texas. He is an assistant professor of poetry at the University of Illinois in Chicago.