



Willie Edward Taylor Carver Jr. is an advocate, Kentucky Teacher of the Year, the author of a bestselling collection of narrative poetry about his childhood growing up queer in Appalachia, *Poems for Red States* (University Press of Kentucky), which ~~was~~

- a Book Riot Best Book of 2023,
- a Top Ten Best Book of Appalachia by *Read Appalachia*
- a top ten 2023 Southern Book in *Garden and Gun*
- an IndieBound and American Booksellers Association's must-have book of 2024,
- a 2023 Top Ten Over-The-Rainbow book by the American Library Association,
- a 2024 Community of Literary Magazines and Presses Pride Month poem selection,
- a 2024 Whippoorwill Book Award Honor Book,
- a current finalist for the 2024 Judy Gaines Young Book Award,
- and awarded a 2024 Stonewall Book Award – Barbara Gittings Literature Honor Book.

Willie has an MFA in creative writing at the University of Kentucky. He publishes and presents on the subjects of education, marginalization, and identity, and his story has been featured on ABC, CBS, PBS, NPR, and in *The Washington Post*, *Monday*, and Good Morning America. His story was chosen by Jonathan Van Ness as a story to share for education, and his advocacy has led him to engage President Biden and to testify before the United States Congressional Committee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. His creative work has been published in *100 Days in Appalachia*, *Young Ravens Literary Review*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Largehearted Boy Blog*, *Smoky Blue Literary Magazine*, *Miracle Monocle*, *Good River Review*, *Salvation Society*, and *Lesbian Review Worldwide*

Carver has spoken across the United States about the impact of the past on our present selves and the ways in which our most underserved students are being harmed by the systems around them. His university speaking engagements include University of Kentucky, the University of Tennessee, Morehead State University, Centre College, Universidad Lead de Costa Rica, Berea College, Western Carolina University, Northern Kentucky University, and the Francis Parker School, among many others. He has been invited to speak at Manhattan's LGBTQ center, Bookmarks of North Carolina, the National Gill Foundation, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Council of Teachers of Foreign Language, Pride at Work, South by Southwest, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the 2023 International Narrative 4 Conference.