

# Featured Writer Interview with BekahJo G.

BekahJo G. is a lively 34-year-old who has lived all over the United States, everywhere from Maine to Alabama to Oregon. She currently lives in Ohio, but in 2016, spent some time in the Portland area and participated in a Write Around Portland workshop. BekahJo's strong faith informs everything she does; she believes people are called to be a light in the darkness, and to make a difference to individuals who cross her path.

In addition to writing, care giving and living a life that honors her faith, BekahJo also enjoys crochet. She taught herself by watching YouTube videos and makes hats, blankets, scarves and "anything soft." She loves living the country life, keeping chickens, and is looking forward to planting a large Back to Eden garden next spring.



*Excerpt from "A Little Girl's Walk"*  
by BekahJo

It was so much fun to walk to Mamaw's from our itty bitty house on the hill. I would wind my way through the woods, watching the birds jump from place to place. I wished to be a bird. How would it be to live in this green wonderland of trees? How would it be to eat a slimy crawly worm? How would it be to build a nest out of straw and hay and the hair Mamaw cut from my head last week?

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## Interview with Featured Writer BekahJo G.

Interviewer: Elisabeth Geier, Write Around volunteer

### **What drew you to join the Write Around Portland workshop?**

I heard about it in the counseling that I was involved in. One of the other women that was in the counseling had attended [a workshop] and she spoke highly of it, so I decided that it was something I'd like to try, something out of my comfort zone. I was up for a new experience and meeting new friends and new people, and wanted to just expand my horizons.

### **How did you feel the first day? Were you nervous to try something new?**

Do I remember? Haha! I think I was excited. I didn't know exactly what to expect, so I was a little excited and curious.

### **What was your experience like in the workshop?**

I enjoyed it immensely. I looked forward to every time we got together. It was a time to just do something different, unwind from different things in life and focus on being creative.

### **Had you written before this workshop?**

Very little. I had written a little bit of poetry when I was a kid, but I had a lack of motivation, a lack of confidence, really. I had a lack of confidence.

**How did it feel, then, to start writing and to share what you were writing with other people?**

It was exciting! I was surprised by myself in terms of what I was putting down on paper, and I really enjoyed sharing it with others and getting feedback. It was a lot of fun, and helpful. Helpful in building my confidence, and helpful in getting ideas.

**I like that you said that you were “surprised” by yourself. What about it was surprising to you?**

It was surprising how easily things flowed out when I had a prompt. I thought that I'd have a hard time coming up with things and I didn't. [The facilitator] would give a prompt and all of a sudden things would just start flowing!

**How did you feel about hearing what other people had written in the workshop?**

I really enjoyed it. It was really true to the fact that everybody is different, everybody sees the world differently, and getting to hear people's different stories and pieces just really opened that up. Like one of the ladies was so quiet and timid, but her writing was so strong and so beautiful.

**Have you continued to write?**

No! (Laughing) I've thought about looking for another group here because I think that that was what really helped me –the fact that [the writing workshop] was something structured, something that I could go to and something that was going to be the focus. Whereas here, life is busy and chickens have to be fed.

**And the chickens probably don't write much.**

No! But I do talk to them.

**You brought your sister and your mother to workshop sessions. What does it mean to you to share the Write Around Portland experience with them?**

I just thought that both of them would enjoy it. My mom is a writer herself, so I thought that that would be something she would enjoy. And I wanted to share the fun that I was having. My sister has lots of little boys and doesn't get away much, and I thought that was something we could do together. And she's also a writer. She writes songs.

**You also had quite a crowd at the anthology reading! How did it feel to get up in front of a crowd and read your work?**

I was nervous but I think it went pretty well. I was excited to have my friends and family there. It was nice that they were able to come.

**You seemed very confident about your reading.**

I practiced a lot in my head!

**How did you feel about being published in the anthology?**

I was super excited! I was telling everybody, “I'm published, I'm published!” That was exciting. I don't know why I don't write more, because that was very encouraging.

**After your Write Around Portland experience, would you recommend it to other people?**

Definitely! Yes, I would encourage people, even if they don't think they can write, to go and check it out and they might be surprised like I was!

**Do you have any other thoughts or memories from your experience that you'd like to share with people?**

Just that if you're open and willing to get to know people, you can glean a lot of wonderful things from others if you're not close-minded – if you're open to listening, and you're willing to take [feedback]. We always had positive feedback – that was one of our rules – so we didn't really get any negative feedback, but the positive was very helpful.