

JEANINE HATHAWAY (1945 -)



Jeanine Hathaway teaches writing and literature at Wichita State University. Originally from Chicago, she settled in Wichita over thirty years ago. In her writings, she explores the intersections between knowledge and belief. She was a Dominican nun as a young woman, and this experience informs her work. Keen observation grounds her poems, which create situations for exploration of intangible faith.

"Reconnaissance," a title that is also a synonym for exploration, focuses on a woman who could be a neighbor "across the street." I suspect she could also be a guise of the poet herself. Scenes in Hathaway's poetry could be set in Wichita, but they are made more general, to fit experience of any reader. The woman forays into dark morning, a time that should be sunrise, but instead she is immersed in a sightless darkness that reveals only self. The woman is like a fish, awake yet submerged in watery depths. Her heartbeat centers her own "atmosphere," again in a pre-dawn and pre-creation setting. Yet in this dark place, she finds two things: body and grace. These create the paradox of incarnation.

RECONNAISSANCE

**Before dawn, before the first
hushed light causes her children
to stir, the woman across the street
rises, every morning, extending
her life backwards into night
as a fish sated at the surface
will dive deeper and darker
until even sight is a memory
floating off.**

**She is alert now, aware of
herself as out of proportion,
mirrored through water;
expansive, most reflective
and faithful, and still
surrounded, governed
by the immense heartbeat
of her own atmosphere,
the unsettling grace of morning
and her cold feet.**

Education: Jeanine Hathaway earned a BA in English (Siena Heights College, 1970) and an MFA in Poetry (Bowling Green State University, 1973).

Career: This poet published *The Self as Constellation: Poems* (University of North Texas Press, 2002, 2001 Vassar Miller Prize for Poetry). Her prose includes an autobiographical novel, *Motherhouse* (Hyperion, 1992) and monthly personal essays for *The Wichita Times*. She published in numerous *DoubleTake*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Greensboro Review*, *River Styx*, *The Ohio Review*, and *The Best Spiritual Writing*. Hathaway is a professor at Wichita State University and received the Wichita State University Regents' Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1993.