



Patricia Traxler is the author of four published volumes of poetry, including *Forbidden Words*, (University of Missouri) and her newest poetry collection, *Naming the Fires* (Hanging Loose Press, Brooklyn, NY, January 2016).

Her fiction and poetry have appeared in such publications as *The Boston Review*, *The Nation*, *Ploughshares*, *Glimmer Train*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times Literary Supplement*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The American Voice*, *Slate Internet Magazine*, *Agni*, *The Kenyon Review*, *New Letters*, and *The Boston Phoenix Literary Supplement*.

Traxler's poetry and prose have been included in such anthologies as *Best American Poetry '94*, edited by A.R. Ammons, (Scribner); *The Ring of Words* (poetry), edited and introduced by Andrew Motion (Daily Telegraph and Sutton Publishing, Ltd., London, '98); *The Handbook of Heartbreak* (poetry), edited by Robert Pinsky (Morrow, '98); *Night Errands* (essays), edited by Roderick Townley (University of Pittsburgh Press, '98); and *Grandmothers: Granddaughters Remember* (essays), edited by M. Bouvard Syracuse '98'.

Also See: [2003 Touchstone interview](#) (PDF) and [Wikipedia page](#)

Writing Honors, Fiction and Poetry, include:

- Two Bunting Poetry Fellowships at Radcliffe College (1990-91 and 1991-92)
- 1991 Ploughshares Cohen Award for Best Poem of the Year
- 1993 Writer's Voice of New York City, Short Fiction Award
- 1994 Kansas Literary Fellowship in Poetry
- 1996 Hugo Poet-in-Residence, University of Montana
- 1997 Thurber Poet-in-Residence, Thurber House, Columbus, Ohio
- 1997 Hackney Literary Award for Short Fiction
- 1998 Short Fiction Award of Georgia State University
- 1998 Pablo Neruda Award for Poetry, Nimrod Magazine

Traxler has been a visiting lecturer at many U.S. universities including Radcliffe College, the University of California San Diego, Emerson College, Utah State University, The Ohio State University, The University of Montana, Kansas University Lawrence, and San Diego State University.

She is also the author of a novel, *Blood* (St. Martin's Press, 2001/02; Piatkus, UK, 2002/03) and in Swedish, Spanish, and German translations.

See poems samples on following pages



Patricia Traxler

Distinguished Kansas Poet

• [Website](#)

Last Hike Before Leaving Montana

Send forth Thy light and Thy truth. Late winter,
last hike before leaving Montana, and it's like
finding a diamond; now I don't want to go.
I sit in the dirt and put my hands in your tracks.
For the first time in a long time I don't doubt. Now
I know I always knew you were here. You are
the beginning of disclosure, the long-felt presence

Suddenly incarnate. Behind me my friend warns, If we
see the bear, get into a fetal position. No problem,
I tell her, I'm always in a fetal position--I was born
in a fetal position. Did you know, she says, the body
of a shaved bear looks exactly like a human man?
I skip a stone, feel a sudden bloat of grief, then laugh.
I ask her, Who would shave a bear? We climb

Further up Rattlesnake Creek, watch winter sun glitter
off dark water. No matter how high we go I look higher.
Sometimes absence can prove presence. That's not exactly
faith, I know. All day, everywhere, I feel you near at hand.
There's so much to understand, and everything to prove. Up
high the air is thin and hard, roars in the ears like love.

(Published in Slate Internet Magazine)

Articles of Faith

What about these jonquil bulbs that bear and bloom
year after year beside the porch, as if the hand
that planted them decades ago were still
in the world to hail their bounty? And what
of the doe who comes from the woods to the edge
of the north field every evening, standing
calm beside the rude highway that cuts
through her heaven, as if nothing were there
but the silence of wheat. Not knowledge,
but belief. Or our voices leaping back
and forth over the wire, conjuring
presence, as if distance and time and a life
were nothing. (Think how time must prove itself
constantly through movement, inventing observable
change.) Not having, but desiring. Your palm
on my belly, fingers warm over hipbone, pulse
of your wrist twinned in the cells of my skin. Not
photograph, but memory. Consider this: the Word
made flesh. Oh, I know what love is. I once saw
the heart still beating in the carcass of a butchered hen.

(Published in New Letters)

Additional poems on following pages



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Night Bloom

Midnight. The face of a fan turns
here to there in the bedroom's
dark. Beneath just a sheet
from time to time their same knees
touch, and nothing
more. They've come apart
from what they knew, or thought, for all those
years. Lately in daylight she traces
a narrative of containment, changes
the subject, stipulates needs. He noodles
piano keys, answers his phone, acquiesces.
Nights grow huge with history and the swell
of unspent language. Her dreams come in mumbles
and starts; he sleeps on the edge, waking often.
Outside in a breeze, the jessamine bush he planted
a dozen years ago beneath their window has
come back into bloom; its pale flesh opens to night
air, awash in shadow's grace. He knows it, feels it
there, but doesn't dare take in the scent
of its cruel, crucial dream. Midnight now. The face
of the fan turns here to there in their dark
room while he and she breathe slowly in
and out, take comfort in the things they know
from memory, while all the while a faint rhythm
still locked in the pulse suggests a time, a turn,
a tune, some long irretrievable music
they once had almost by heart.

(Published in The Boston Review
and in Anthology of Magazine Verse
& Yearbook of American Poetry, Monitor Press)

Death of a Distant In-Law

We watched the deaf-mute buried
in his largest silence. Earlier
in the relatives' chapel his family,
brought together there, nodded, smiled,
and whispered news of jobs and kids and cars,
catching up, while through the curtain drawn
to hide our tears, the preacher celebrated
This Man's Simplicity. This man. I thought of
family gatherings through the years, this distant
in-law in a corner chair somewhere, watching
the silent movie of our stir. Sometimes
he moved his lips, touched his useless ears,
cajoling; large eyes looming like dark
closets not sorted through in years.
Now he lay like marble, big hands clasped
across his heart, and finally his eyes were closed,
beneath the lids that unnamed knowledge
stored and locked away.

(Published in Agni Review
and Best American Poetry '94, A.R. Ammons)

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