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## **PRESS BIO: Penny Harter**

Poet and fiction writer Penny Harter graduated from Douglass College and for many years taught high school English at public and private schools in New Jersey and New Mexico. She has also visited schools all over New Jersey as a writer-in-residence and currently works as a teaching artist for the New Jersey Writers Project, conducting workshops in schools around the state. She helped launch New Jersey high schools' participation in "Poetry Out Loud," a program co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.

In the last decade, Harter has published four books of poems: *Lizard Light: Poems From the Earth, Buried in the Sky, Along River Road*, and *The Night Marsh*.

Numerous anthologies and magazines worldwide have published Harter's work, including X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia's *An Introduction to Poetry* (various publishers, 1990 onward); *Sisters of the Earth: Women's Poetry and Prose About Nature* (Vintage Books, 2003); *American Nature Writing 2003* (Fulcrum), and most recently *The Unswept Path* (White Pine Press, 2005) and *The Poets of New Jersey* (Jersey Shore, 2005).

Harter has presented readings, talks, and workshops from coast to coast at venues such as the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festivals, the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Border Book Festivals, Haiku North America Conferences, the Rocky Mountain Land Library, the Colorado Mountain Club, the Sierra Club, New Jersey Teen Arts Festivals, the New Jersey Reading Association, the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools, and at events in Japan.

Her essays on teaching writing appear in *The Alphabet of the Trees: A Guide to Nature Writing*; *The Teachers and Writers Guide to William Carlos Williams*; and *The Teachers and Writers Guide to Classic American Literature* (all published by Teachers & Writers Collaborative), and *An Exaltation of Forms: Contemporary Poets Celebrate the Diversity of Their Art*, (U. of Michigan, 2002). She also contributed a chapter on teaching to *The Haiku Handbook* (McGraw Hill, 1985; Kodansha, 1989).

In addition to the poems in her illustrated books for young readers, *The Beastie Book: An Alphabestiary of Imaginary Animals* (Shenanigan Books, forthcoming 2009) and *Shadow Play* (Simon & Schuster, 1994), others of Harter's poems for young people appear in *I Feel a Little Jumpy Around You* (Simon & Schuster, 1996); *Welcome to Your Life: Writings for the Heart of Young America* (Milkweed Editions, 1998); *Knock at a Star: A Child's Introduction to Poetry* (Little Brown, 1999); *Stone Bench in an Empty Park* (Orchard Books, 2000); *A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms* (Candlewick Press, 2005), and *Hey You: Poems of Address* (Harper Collins, 2006).

Harter has received three fellowships in poetry from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and a fellowship in teaching writing from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. She also received the Mary Carolyn Davies Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, and was named the first recipient of the William O. Douglas Nature Writing Award for her poems in *American Nature Writing 2002*. Harter was invited to write an autobiographical essay for *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series* (vol. 28, 1998), which also appears in *Contemporary Authors* (vol. 172, 1999). Her biography appears in several who's-whos related to teaching and writing, and in Marquis' *Who's Who of American Women*.

For more information, please see Harter's web site at <http://www.2hweb.net/penhart>.