



# Her Words: Diverse Voices In Contemporary Appalachian Womens Poetr

*Felicia Mitchell*

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Her Words

Diverse Voices in Contemporary Appalachian Women's Poetry

Edited by Felicia Mitchell

Over the last generation, Appalachia has produced a number of women poets who have refined and redefined the boundaries of the region's literature and identity. *Her Words* focuses on the work of twenty such poets, whose diverse voices have enriched Appalachian literature in particular and American poetry in general. Combining poems, interviews, critical essays, and comments by the poets themselves—some acclaimed nationally and others best known regionally—*Her Words* celebrates the work of these writers and demonstrates their rightful place as part of the literary canon both within and beyond Appalachia.

Each chapter opens with two poems by the writer under consideration, followed by a commentary that highlights the contributions and distinctive characteristics of that poet. The poets' own perspectives on their work are revealed in conversations and interviews with the critics. This multifaceted approach allows readers an unusually balanced view of the poetic voice and what inspires it. Moreover, *Her Words* reveals a diversity within Appalachian poetry and culture that is often overlooked. In their work, the poets reflect this richness of the Appalachian experience, whether the writer is a native of the region, a transplant, an "expatriate" living elsewhere, or a sojourner. That legacy includes a pervasive sense of place, particularly as revealed in language and dialect; the value of family; the power of solitude and isolation; and the importance of religious faith.

*Her Words* sheds light not only on Appalachian women's poetry in all its complexity but also on a segment of contemporary American literature that has too often been neglected by scholars and critics alike.

The Editor: Felicia Mitchell is associate professor of English and director of the writing program at Emory & Henry College in Emory, Virginia. She edited *Words & Quilts*, a book of poetry, and has published two collections of poetry, *Case Hysterics* and *Earthenware Fertility Figure*.

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