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Poet continues to explore her obsessions in new collection

PITTSBURGH—"Writers have obsessions," said Jan Beatty in an interview. "My poems seem to be really urban—a lot of urban narratives, some drugs, sexuality, issues of gender and [adoption]. It rotates in there and I try to keep pushing in terms of form and content but I probably stay with those obsessions. That's not going to go anywhere and I don't want it to."

Beatty's obsessions are engagingly evident in her latest and fourth collection, *The Switching/Yard*, just released by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

"*The Switching/Yard* is Beatty's unflinching and unapologetic turn, a fierce conflagration of lyric and gorgeously rendered narrative that refuses to give the reader a chance, or reason, to turn away," stated poet Patricia Smith. "There is no predictable rooting here, no way to dismiss these stanzas as simple leaps in the evolution of a starkly talented storyteller. Beatty's staunch refusal to bow to the ordinary—her 'switching' of gender roles, positions of power, or the very idea of home—infuses this volume with a brilliance not open to debate."

D. A. Powell praised Beatty's work by saying, "She is a poet who speaks with courage and experience. Her poems are electrifyingly candid. Remember the scene in 'Mommy Dearest' when Faye Dunaway stares down the stuffed shirts of the corporate boardroom? 'This ain't my first time at the rodeo.' Beatty could have snapped that entire table in half with the raw energy of her words. In the words of R&B vocalist Carl Carlton, 'she's a bad mamajama.'"

Beatty, who resides in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the author of three previous poetry collections: *Red Sugar*, *Boneshaker*, and *Mad River*, winner of the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize. She is the recipient of the Creative Achievement Award in Literature from the Heinz Foundation, the Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, and two fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, among other honors. Beatty is co-host and producer of *Prosody*, a weekly radio program featuring the work of national writers. She is the director of the creative writing program at Carlow University in Pittsburgh.

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