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**“Portrait of life on the enchanted margins” wins Starrett Poetry Prize;
Northern California writer addresses women’s experiences on the road**

PITTSBURGH—Miriam Bird Greenberg has crossed the continent aboard freight trains, as a hitchhiker and by bicycle. Her debut full-length poetry collection *In the Volcano’s Mouth* draws from those adventures and her encounters with contemporary nomads, hobos, and others living on society’s social and economic edges. It is the winner of the 2015 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize, and will be published this fall by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

“Set in a semi-mythical America, *In the Volcano’s Mouth* in part addresses women’s experiences on the road, which are often reduced to sidekick or victim, or omitted entirely, in romantic portrayals of life on the road,” Greenberg explained. “My collection is a portrait of life on the enchanted margins, a private world large enough for anyone to find themselves in.”

Ed Ochester, editor of the Pitt Poetry Series and final judge for the Starrett, said of Greenberg’s work: “These poems do what the best poetry sometimes does: reveal and deepen our understanding of the strangeness in the ordinary. And they do so in language clear as a bell.”

Greenberg, 35, teaches creative writing and English as a second language. The daughter of a New York Jew and a goat-raising anthropologist involved in the back-to-the-land movement, she grew up on an organic farm in rural Texas.

Author of two chapbooks—*All night in the new country* (Sixteen Rivers) and *Pact-Blood, Fevergrass* (Ricochet Editions)—Greenberg has been honored with fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center, and The Poetry Foundation. Her work has appeared in *Poetry*, the *Missouri Review*, and in the anthologies *Best New Poets 2014* (Samovar) and *The Queer South* (Sibling Rivalry). A former Wallace Stegner Fellow, she lives in the San Francisco Bay area, where for many years she collaboratively developed site-specific performances for small audiences.

“It’s an honor to join the Pitt Poetry Series, which I’ve admired for years,” Greenberg said. “I’m still half in shock over it. For the first week after speaking to Ed (Ochester) on the phone, I suspected it might’ve been a particularly lifelike dream. That his congratulatory email, which I unearthed after the fact, had been filtered into my spam folder heightened that feeling: were the spammers getting especially savvy in their seemingly personalized pitches?”

The Starrett prize is awarded for a first full-length book of poems. Named after the original director of UPP, it carries a cash award of \$5,000 in addition to publication.