

Ruth Padel

Writer

Ruth Padel is a prize-winning poet and author whose forthcoming book *The Mara Crossing* offers a unique perspective, in poems and prose, on animal and human migration. Ruth's 2009 poetry collection *Darwin - A Life in Poems*, shortlisted for the Costa Prize, is an intimate lyrical interpretation of Charles Darwin life and work by his great great grand-daughter.



Agents

Robert Kirby
0203 214 0800

Associate Agent
Kate Walsh
kwalsh@unitedagents.co.uk
020 3214 0884

Publications

Poetry

Publication Details	Notes
Learning to Make an Oud in Nazareth 2014 Chatto & Windus	'Making is our defence against the dark...' Through images of conflict and craftsmanship, Ruth Padel's powerful new poems address the Middle East, tracing a quest for harmony in the midst of destruction. An oud, the central instrument of Middle Eastern music, is made and broken. An ancient synagogue survives attacks, a Palestinian boy in a West Bank refugee camp learns capoeira, and a guide shows us Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity during a siege. At the heart of the book are Christ's last words from the Cross. Uniting this moving collection is the common ground shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam: a vision of human life as pilgrimage and struggle but also as music and making. With care and empathy, Ruth Padel suggests how rifts in the Holy Land speak to conflict in our own hearts. 'We identify. Some chasm / through the centre must be in and of us all.'

Publication Details	Notes
Darwin: A life in Poems 2010 Vintage	<p>Ambitious...shows her extraordinary talent Observer Moments of Darwin's life captured with an economy and fluency that prosaic biographers might envy Spectator Inspired...her poems are delicate, but with an unusual density...Padel's subtle account is worthy of a fine novelist The Times It feels like a deft act of collaboration between the living and the dead, one melding easily with the other...she seems to have caught the quintessence of the man's character, as if in a butterfly net Economist This is not a mere collection, but a complete miniature biography of the great man...immensely powerful... With her gleaming tropical imagery and a voice resonant with wondrous and tragic overtones, Padel has given us a renewed and intimate Darwin. Guardian Exquisite, precise and moving poems...Once I started reading I could not put it down until I had reached the end, and then I turned back for the pleasure of reading again. A fascinating, very rich book...With sympathy and grace, Padel moves deftly between between science, love and family; between the vast processes of evolution and a personal life. Daring and exciting, brilliant and subtle, stunning and deeply impressive...a lesson to biographers and poets alike.</p>
The Mara Crossing 2012 Chatto & Windus	<p>Home is where you start from, but where is a swallow's real home? And what does 'native' mean if the English oak is an immigrant from Spain?</p> <p>In ninety richly varied poems and illuminating prose interludes, Ruth Padel's original new book weaves science, myth, wild nature and human history to conjure a world created and sustained by migration.</p> <p>'We're all from somewhere else,' she begins, tracing the millennia-old journeys of cells, trees, birds and beasts. Geese battle raging winds over Mount Everest, lemurs skim precipices in Madagascar and wildebeest, at the climax of their epic trek from Tanzania, brave a river filled with the largest, hungriest crocodiles in Africa. Human migration has shaped civilisation but today is one of the greatest challenges the world faces. In a series of incisive portraits, Padel turns to the struggles of human displacement - the Flight into Egypt, John James Audubon emigrating to America (feeding migrant birds en route), migrant workers in Mumbai and refugees labouring over a drastically changing planet - to show how the purpose of migration, for both humans and animals, is survival.</p> <p>Poignant, thought-provoking and utterly compelling, here is a magnificent tapestry of life on the move from the acclaimed author of Darwin: A Life in Poems.</p>
The Soho Leopard 2004 Chatto & Windus	<p>Hallucinatory and lyrical, these poems cross Dulwich Pizza Hut with mating alligators, endangered animal species with stage directions for Beauty and the Beast. Making wild connections over space and time, Ruth Padel's new collection displays her gift for getting into the same register areas of life that are normally far apart. Full of wild life and colour, black and gold, The Soho Leopard explores new extremes of Padel's voice, range and poetics, linking mythology and zoological science to her rich descriptive powers, vivid speaking voice and the passion and sensuality of her language.</p>

Non-Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
The Poem and the Journey: 60 Poems for the Journey of Life 2008 Vintage	"A wonderful, much-needed book on the journey of meaning. She makes it fun. allowing us the dramatic experience of the poem meeting our own lives. You want to open it each day for another revelation" - Fiona Shaw "As a writer, you would probably choose Ruth Padel as your ideal reader. Her eye misses very little of the nudging and winking that goes on in a poem. She seems able to tune into the silent music of text on the page, always alert to the aacoustic play of consonants and vowels. She is rigorous and true to her sense of criticism but also a generous reader, prepared to enter the spirit of a poem." - Simon Armitage ""This vivid, illuminating book, so clear, passionate and inviting. opens many pathways for the reader of contemporary poetry, bringing to bear on it not only current thinking but the whole world of the past . - Gillian Beer
52 Ways of Looking at a Poem: A Poem for Every Week of the Year 2004 Vintage	"Part of the joy of 52 Ways is the ongoing discussion you feel you can have with Padel and the poem. The book marks an important milestone and continues to have resonance for poets, readers and academics alike." Literary Landmarks: Groundbreaking Books in the History of Women's Literature, Mslexia, October 2009. "52 Ways of Looking at a Poem began as a newspaper column in 1998 and Padel's well-informed and expectation-bustingly long-running column helped set the ball rolling for the popular redefinition of poetry." Mslexia, October 2009
Sir Walter Raleigh (Poet to Poet) 2010 Faber and Faber	In this series, a contemporary poet selects and introduces a poet of the past. By their choice of poems and by the personal and critical reactions they express in their prefaces, the editors offer insights into their own work as well as providing an accessible and passionate introduction to some of the greatest poets of our literature. Sir Walter Raleigh, poet, scholar, soldier and explorer, travel-writer, historian and favourite courtier of Queen Elizabeth I, was born in Devon around 1552, knighted in 1584, imprisoned twice in the Tower of London, where he wrote his History of the World, and executed in 1618. Many famous poems attributed to him, such as 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage', may not actually be his. But, like the many poems written to him by the queen and others, they testify to what Raleigh stood for in the Elizabethan age, as a poet and a man.
Silent Letters of the Alphabet 2010 Bloodaxe Books Ltd	In this innovative series of public lectures at Newcastle University, leading contemporary poets speak about the craft and practice of poetry to audiences drawn from both the city and the university. The lectures are then published in book form by Bloodaxe, giving readers everywhere the opportunity to learn what the poets themselves think about their own subject. Ruth Padel's lectures link metaphor to silence and white space on a page. Equating a poem's music with its politics, she explores tone, register and harmony, suggesting that how poems hold our "attention" is through "tension".

Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
Where the Serpent Lives 2010 Little, Brown	"An intensely readable parable of love and fear." Daily Mail *** "A journey of discovery, stylishly told." Sunday Express "A rich, playful style that fizzles with sensory detail, an evocative journey from urban paralysis to near-mythical Bengal". Sunday Business Post, Ireland "A novel you will not lightly forget. Only Emily Brontë has embraced Padel's radical and sympathetic inclusiveness of creaturely life." Guardian 'The prose glitters on the page in this story of a woman's journey of rediscovery to the jungles of India, the land where she grew up.' Vogue "Padel's prose shines" Observer "A gripping investigation of love and terror." Andrew O'Hagan "Evocative depictions of life in the fast-degrading forests of India." Independent "There is mystery in the moments that focus on a family of foxes in Rosamund's garden, a gecko in her father's study, a badger sett near Irena's house; a sense of the wordless world of animals watching humans.' Times Literary Supplement