

Glenis Redmond:

Poet,
Teaching Artist,
Griot

an interview by Lisa Sarasohn



PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL GROOKS

Glenis Redmond entering a room is an event. Glenis entered my home in Asheville on a Saturday afternoon in June. She arrives wearing a black t-shirt, with white letters spelling out “We the people’ means everyone.” The sentence circles an upraised fist.

Glenis is rooted in family. She is Jeanette Redmond’s devoted daughter, mother to twins Amber and Celeste, and Gaga to grandson Julian. As a friend and colleague, I’ve witnessed her Afro-Carolinian profession of poetry for more than twenty years. Her accolades and achievements as poet and teacher of poetry are many. Just a sampling: MFA in Poetry from Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina; a Cave Canem Fellow; co-creator of the Writer-in-Residence program at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in Flat Rock, North Carolina. Mentor Poet for the National Student Poets Program; Artist-in-Residence at the State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey; and Poet-in-Residence at the Peace Center for the Performing Arts in Greenville, South Carolina.

In her post at the Peace Center, Glenis has created and continues to curate Peace Voices, the program through which she conducts school and community poetry-writing workshops and mentors teens as Poetry Ambassadors. She also organizes and moderates Poetic Conversations, a series of free community events that feature acclaimed poets in readings, dialogues, and audience talkbacks on topics reflecting the diversity of Greenville’s population.

Her publications include poems published in the *North Carolina Literary Review*, *When Women Waken*, *Obsidian: Black Literature in Review*, *Red Rock Review*, *The Cortland Review*, *The Tidal Basin Review*, and *EMRYS*. She has also published poetry collections: *What My Hand Say*, *Under The Sun*, and *Backbone*.¹

“When I put pen to paper,
a fire started within me.”

¹ Glenis Redmond, *What My Hand Say* (Press 53, 2016; reviewed in *NCLR Online* 2018), *Under The Sun* (Main Street Rag, 2008), and *Backbone* (Underground Epics Poetry, 2000).

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