

LEAVING
HOME TO
RETURN
HOME:
WRITING
NORTH
CAROLINA
HOMEPLACE
FROM THE PARTICULAR
TO THE UNIVERSAL

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WATTS

by
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and Maia L. Butler



An Interview *with* Stephanie Powell Watts

STEPHANIE POWELL WATTS WAS BORN in Lenoir, North Carolina, a city named after William Lenoir, an American Revolutionary War general, a city where a Confederate monument still stands in the town square. Watts received her BA from the University of North Carolina in Charlotte and her PhD from the University of Missouri in Columbia, where she held a Gus T. Ridgel Fellowship. Watts is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing and Literature at Lehigh University, but she brings readers to her familiar homeplace of the North Carolina foothills in the pages of her fiction. Though we look forward to the long career ahead of her, her accolades are already numerous: she received the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence in 2012, the Whiting Award in 2013, the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work in 2017, and her short fiction has been included in two volumes of the *Best New Stories from the South* anthology.¹

¹ "Family Museum of the Ancient Postcards," originally published in *Oxford American*, was selected for *New Stories from the South 2007, The Year's Best*, edited by Edward P. Jones. "Unassigned Territory," first published in *New Letters*, is in the 2009 volume, edited by Madison Smartt Bell.