



# West of 101

*Ruth F. Harrison*

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## **West of 101** Ruth F. Harrison

In luminous language, Ruth F. Harrison brings us, in "West of 101," a spirited collection of poems celebrating a narrow strip of rocky coastline along the Pacific in Oregon. A reader breathes salt wind, clambers among black stones and into sea caves, follows the moves of sandpiper and turnstone, whether making tracks on the sand or in breath-taking flight. Natives of the area will revel in familiar wonders. Readers who have never been near any ocean will experience the Pacific coast and surf, superb and shining, in these poems. Sharon Roso, past president of the Oregon Poetry Association, says of this collection, "Ruth's poems are to me the 'house-where-bread-appears.' She knows, and relates, the secrets ravens tell, whether in sand or wind or red rock or black night, she 'spins the wild world in (her) quiet talk.' She tells us that "every soul's alone..." but by following the directions, the assignment, she creates the spark that tells us she knows we are there.... All I can say is Ruth, 'thank you for the light.'" Jean Esteve, author of "The Winter Sun" and a finalist for the Oregon Book Award, comments, "Ruth F. Harrison again has her feelers sharply honed, probing for the most significant details, this time to bring us a celebration of the sea and of what it feels like to live on the Oregon coast. The light from a lighthouse 'all white gold, strikes in the warm heart colder than black seas.' She sings of the 'long-purpled swath at the horizon,' the 'traffic of wind,' the "silken ripples" on Alsi Bay. Images, textures, smells ('we smell the rain coming'), sounds ('the heater's sigh' in another, indoor, rain scene) abound in these beautifully crafted poems."

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