

Ruth Padel is a prize-winning poet and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Zoological Society of London. As Chair of the Poetry Society 2003-6 she presided over radical change. Great-great-granddaughter of Charles Darwin, she has taught Greek at Oxford, opera in the Modern Greek Department at Princeton, excavated Minoan tombs on Crete, presented a Radio 4 series on Hans Andersen, sung in an Istanbul nightclub and the choir of St Eustache, Paris. In addition to her highly acclaimed poetry collections she has published books about ancient Greek religion; rock music, Greek myth and masculinity; and how to read contemporary poetry by treating each poem as a journey. *Tigers in Red Weather* has a secret selection of poems at the back (by poets from Donne and Keats to Emily Dickinson), which she took with her on her travels.

‘A strange and powerful work, part-memoir, part-travelogue, part-love song . . . Padel is brilliant at describing the various inhospitable terrains through which she travels. Few writers do leeches, ticks and mosquitoes quite as well as she. When a tiger occasionally strays too close we feel its hot breath and see its glittering golden eyes as if we were there ourselves’

Kathryn Hughes, *Mail on Sunday*

‘Illuminating this extraordinary travel memoir is a Rimbaud-esque quest for the essence of ferocity . . . This is no mere gutsy travelogue but a poet’s attempt to do what the scientist does: ‘saying precisely what and how you saw’ . . . This is the poet as super-naturalist, always giving more than her best, no-holds-barred, for that elusive flash of the sublime’

Independent

‘A beautiful book. Londoner Padel makes an unlikely tiger tracker but doesn’t let fear hold her back in remote, demanding places. She has the linguistic gifts and imaginative drive to keep the reader caring . . . she explains the metaphysical appeal of the tiger as well as its physical, scientific and political significance’

Sunday Times

‘Beyond superlatives. She mixes conservation science with natural history, myth and anecdote, without missing a beat. It reminds you of Peter Matthiesson’s *Snow Leopard* or William Fiennes’ *Snow Geese* but deserves a class of its own’

Sunday Times of India

'Ruth Padel honours this vital symbol of the natural world with the voice of science and of a passionate poet . . . *Tigers in Red Weather* is the most entrancing book on tigers that I have read, vibrant, lyrical, and sad yet in the end with a spark of hope'

George B. Schaller, Wildlife Conservation Society

'Splendid. Fine and illuminating writing . . . there is grand heroism in her search for the metaphysical links with the wild, that reminded me of *Songlines*, Bruce Chatwin's journey among the aboriginals of Australia. Padel's book is one that I am unlikely to forget'

Conservation Magazine

'The author is a poet who writes exquisite prose, and her book, which is both highly personal and generously objective, combines a vivid if elegiac passion for tigers, a strong sympathy for the people who live near them, and a lucid abhorrence for the greed and stupidity that are taking the animals to extinction'

David Gilmour, *Spectator*

'*Tigers in Red Weather* addresses what it means to preserve the wild on the doorstep of civilisation. Like her great-great-grandfather Charles Darwin, Ruth Padel revels in nature. She sets the tiger's spiritual and physical beauty against a dying love affair in London, as well as weaving in the science of conservation'

Financial Times

'More than a travel book, more than a nature book, this is a spiritual memoir, a book about survival and the constant threat modern life presents to what is special. Ruth Padel is a poet and scholar with a beautifully patient understanding, reminiscent of Ted Hughes, of how the natural world invests itself in our experience'

Andrew O'Hagan, *Telegraph*

'There are few women writing non-fiction today with such a sophisticated understanding of language, such a nuanced approach to style and such brazen willingness to engage with the big issues, personal and political'

Guardian

'Ruth Padel is a poet with no previous history of plunging into snake and scorpion infested jungles and no special aptitude for it. She is neither big, fit, strong nor brave. But she is a wonderful writer, and has produced the best book ever written on the places where tigers live. Yet this is not a book of descriptions. At heart, it is about people and their relationship with animals'

Evening Standard

'[A] wonderful book. Very informative . . . a learned and detailed study of tigers, their habits, their plight, their future. It is a sign of her brilliance and doggedness – or should I say tigerishness – [that she] keeps our attention all the way'.

Literary Review

'Padel's poet's eye brings the landscape and its inhabitants – whether on two legs or four – to vivid life. And however desperate the situation, Padel finds humour in it'

Independent on Sunday

'As Padel zig-zags across the continent, trekking, kayaking, riding elephants bareback, she develops a passion for the tiger, coupled with a fury at countries where no effort is made for conservation and poachers carry all before them'

The Week

'Scenically, *Tigers in Red Weather* is a feast, and in terms of adventure, a brow-sweating foray into the jaws of danger. It also fulfils the key requirement of great travel writing: it surrounds you, engages the brain as well as the senses, and never slackens its momentum'

Tom Adair, *The Scotsman*

'Padel's excursion into the world of an endangered animal captivates . . . she has produced a lyrical chunk of reportage covering two years' worth of tiger-spotting, interacting with an eclectic mix of characters fighting to protect the striped cat . . . discovering entire communities where tigers are "knitted into people's minds"'

Time Out

TIGERS IN RED WEATHER

Ruth Padel



For my mother, who taught us to look
at animals and plants

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