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For Immediate Release

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Award-winning Alabama Poet Proves the Power of “One Little Word”

Birmingham – In her 3rd volume of poetry, Irene Latham looks to “sky”

Nature has long been a topic of choice for poets, and here in Alabama, with its mountains and beaches and valleys, inspiration is everywhere. But for author Irene Latham, it wasn't just the views that generated her latest work. It was selecting “sky” as her One Little Word for 2013.

“Each year I choose a word as a focal point,” said Latham, a Birmingham resident since 1984. “Past words I've used are 'joy' and 'listen' and 'fierce.' The idea is to allow your life to be enriched by the word, and to see where it takes you.”

“Sky” not only inspired weekly photographs and quotes at her blog (irenelatham.blogspot.com), but it also billowed new life into a manuscript of poems that had received a number of rejections from publishers. Latham whittled, revised and added poems using her experiences in nature – rock climbing, hiking, scuba diving, cloud gazing – to serve as metaphors in an exploration of relationships with self and others. Titled *The Sky Between Us* (Blue Rooster Press, ISBN: 978-0976255741), the collection evolved into something “stippled, layered/ anything but blue.”

Sky and ocean and mountain and meadow provide rich settings for the poet's exploration into what nature can teach us about being human. From mapping tidepools and surviving the Antarctic sunrise to an ant's view of the afterlife, these poems illuminate our voyages through love, loss and longing, not as individuals, but as the mysterious, beautiful we.

Praised for the simple, emotive quality of her writing, Latham was named 2006 Alabama Poet of the Year and has served as poetry editor for *Birmingham Arts Journal* since 2003. Her first two books of poems *What Came Before* and *The Color of Lost Rooms* have won numerous national awards including the Writer's Digest 19th Annual Book Prize for Poetry. Also a novelist (*Leaving Gee's Bend* and *Don't Feed the Boy*), she is often asked why she continues to write for a market as small as poetry. Poetry is her passion, Latham said.

“I love the intense emotion and the surprise of poetry. It's a jolt of meaning in an instant. Whatever is going on in my life, poetry recharges me. Who doesn't need that kind of experience in today's sound-byte, sometimes

superficial world?”

Latham invites the public to help celebrate the book's release Saturday, January 11, 2 pm at the Historic Cahaba Pumping Station Museum, 4012 Sicard Hollow Road. Featured poets Jerri Beck, Roberet Boliek, Tabitha Bozeman, Bob Collins, Alicia Clavell, Andrew Glaze, Matt Layne, Susan Luther, Barry Marks, Jim Reed, Liz Reed, Bonnie Roberts, Seth Tanner and Joe Whitten will share poems on the theme of “sky.” Books will be available for purchase, and an Open Mic session will follow. Free admission.

The book can also be purchased with inscription and autograph through Paypal at the author's website www.irenelatham.com. For more information about Irene Latham or her books, please visit www.irenelatham.com. To schedule an interview or photo with Latham, please contact her at 205-999-8167 or irene@irenelatham.com.