

## Reaching the Audience · Pattiann Rogers

From the introduction to  
*The First Book of Iridaceae.*

We will start with a single blue dwarf iris  
Appearing as a purple dot on a hairstreak  
Butterfly seen in a distant pine barrens and proceed  
Until we end with a single point of purple spiraling  
Like an invisible wing in the center of the flower  
Making fact.

We will investigate a stand of blue flags crimsoned  
By the last sun still showing over the smoky edges  
Of the ravine and illustrate in sequence the glazing  
Of those iris by the wet gold of an early dawn.

We will survey a five mile field of purple iris  
Holding bristle-legged insects under the tips  
Of their stamens and measure the violet essence  
Gathered at the bases of their wings and devote  
One section to a molecule of iris fragrance  
Preserved and corked in a slender glass.

There will be a composition replicating the motion  
Of the iris rolling sun continually over its rills  
And another for the stillness of the iris sucking ivory  
Moonlight through its hollows making ivory roots.

There will be photographs in series of the eyes  
Of a woman studying the sepals of an iris  
In a lavender vase and a seven page account of the crested  
Iris burning at midnight in the shape of its flame  
And six oriental paintings of purple petals torn apart  
And scattered over snow beneath birches and a poem  
Tracing a bouquet of blue iris tied together like balloons  
Floating across the highest arc of a spring heaven.

There will be an analysis of the word of the iris  
In the breath of the dumb and an investigation  
Of the touch of the iris in the fingertips of the blind

And a description of the iris-shaped spaces existing  
In the forest before the forest became itself  
And a delineation of those blade-thin spaces  
Still existing after the forest has been lost again.

It is the sole purpose of these volumes-in-progress  
To insure that anyone stopped anywhere in any perspective  
Or anyone caught forever in any crease of time or anyone  
Left inside the locked and folded bud of any dream  
Will be able to recognize something on these pages  
And remember.