

Classic Poetry Series

Frances Mayes
- poems -

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Frances Mayes()

Frances Mayes is an American university professor, poet, memoirist, essayist, and novelist.

Born and raised in Fitzgerald, Georgia, Mayes attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, and obtained her BA from the University of Florida. In 1975 she earned her MA from San Francisco State University, where she eventually became Professor of Creative Writing, director of The Poetry Center, and chair of the Department of Creative Writing.

Mayes has published several works of poetry: *Climbing Aconcagua* (1977), *Sunday in Another Country* (1977), *After Such Pleasures* (1979), *The Arts of Fire* (1982), *Hours* (1984), and *Ex Voto* (1995). In 1996 she published the book *Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy*. The book is a memoir of Mayes buying, renovating, and living in an abandoned villa in rural Cortona in Tuscany, a region of Italy. It went to Number One on the New York Times Best Seller list and remained on the list for over two years. In 2003 the film *Under the Tuscan Sun* was released. Adapted to the screen by director Audrey Wells, the movie was loosely based on Mayes's book. In 1999, Mayes followed this literary success with another international bestseller, *Bella Tuscany: The Sweet Life in Italy*, and in 2000 with *In Tuscany*. Mayes's first novel, *Swan*, was published in 2002. With photographer Steven Rothfeld and her husband Edward Kleinschmidt Mayes, she published the phototext *Bringing Tuscany Home* in 2004.

Also a food-and-travel writer, Mayes is the editor of *The Best American Travel Writing 2002* and the author of *A Year in the World: Journeys of A Passionate Traveller* (2006), narratives of her and her husband's travels in Greece, Turkey, Spain, Morocco and other countries.

Now writing full time, she and her poet husband divide their time between homes in Hillsborough, North Carolina and Cortona, Italy, where she serves as the artist director of the annual Tuscan Sun Festival. A new memoir "Every Day in Tuscany" was released in March, 2010.

Sister Cat

Cat stands at the fridge,
Cries loudly for milk.
But I've filled her bowl.
Wild cat, I say, Sister,
Look, you have milk.
I clink my fingernail
Against the rim. Milk.
With down and liver,
A word I know she hears.
Her sad miaow. She runs
To me. She dips
In her whiskers but
Doesn't drink. As sometimes
I want the light on
When it is on. Or when
I saw the woman walking
toward my house and
I thought there's Frances.
Then looked in the car mirror
To be sure. She stalks
The room. She wants. Milk
Beyond milk. World beyond
This one, she cries.

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