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Contact: Louise Hawker, Watermark Communications

Email: lhawker@bendcable.com

Office: 541.388.1095

Cell: 541.419.0414

Editors: See attached page for additional background and reviewer quotes. Author photo available upon request.

Ellen Waterston Wins 2009 WILLA Literary Award for Poetry

Between Desert Seasons Earns Waterston's Second WILLA Award

Bend, Oregon. August 26, 2009. Author and poet Ellen Waterston's collection, *Between Desert Seasons*, has won the prestigious 2009 WILLA Award for Poetry from Women Writing the West. Waterston, director of The Nature of Words and the Writing Ranch, will be honored at the University of California, Los Angeles on September 12, 2009 during the Women Writing the West's 15th annual conference.

Chosen by professional librarians, historians, and university affiliated educators, the WILLA Award represents the best of 2008 published literature set in the American West. An earlier collection by Waterston, *I Am Madagascar*, was awarded the WILLA Prize in Poetry in 2005.

Between Desert Seasons was published December 2008 by Wordcraft of Oregon and was also named a finalist for the 2009 Eric Hoffer Award, an award that honors the memory of the great American philosopher Eric Hoffer by recognizing outstanding writing and the independent spirit of small publishers.

Reviewers' praise for *Between Desert Seasons* includes Pattiann Rogers, award-winning poet and author of 12 books, who said, "The music of Ellen Waterston's language in *Between Desert Seasons* is touching and vibrant, fiery raw and refined, reined in and set free."

Waterston's next publication, a collection of personal and nature essays titled *Where The Crooked River Rises*, is under consideration by Oregon State University Press.

The Nature of Words, a literary organization founded by Waterston, will present its fifth annual literary festival November 4-8, 2009 in Bend, Oregon. Sherman Alexie and nine other acclaimed authors will appear in readings and book signings, workshops, lectures, seminars and panel discussions. For more information, visit www.thenatureofwords.org.

In March 2010, Waterston's Writing Ranch will conduct a week-long writing retreat in Todos Santos, Mexico. More information is available at www.writingranch.com or by calling 541.480.3933.

For more information about Ellen Waterston or *Between Desert Seasons*, or to schedule a reading or interview, contact Louise Hawker, Watermark Communications, (office) 541.388.1095 or (cell) 541.419.0414, or email lhawker@bendcable.com.

About Ellen Waterston

Ellen Waterston is the founder and director of the Writing Ranch (www.writingranch.com), which supports the craft and careers of writers through workshops, retreats and seminars. She also is the founder and director of The Nature of Words (www.thenatureofwords.org) held in Bend, Oregon, scheduled for November 4-8, 2009. Her award-winning essays, short stories and poems have been published in numerous journals and anthologies and reviews. In 2009, Waterston was awarded an Island Institute Fellowship, a month-long writing residency in Sitka, Alaska, and an Individual Artists Fellowship by the Oregon Arts Commission. The Oregon Arts Commission grants recognize the achievements of Oregon artists and the contributions they make to the cultural health of the state.

Waterston is the 2008 winner of the *Oregon Quarterly* Essay Competition, the 2007 recipient of the Obsidian Prize in Poetry and in 2007 was named an Honorary Distinguished Professor of Humane Letters by Oregon State University-Cascades Campus for her accomplishments in the literary arts.

Her memoir, *Then There Was No Mountain*, Rowman and Littlefield publisher, was selected by the *Oregonian* as one of the top ten books in 2003, was a national Foreword and WILLA finalist, and earned her an appearance on Good Morning America with Diane Sawyer. She is also the author of two children's books. In 2003, Waterston was awarded the Special Literary Fellowship for Women Writers given by Oregon's Literary Arts, Inc. She is also the recipient of ten writing residency fellowships.