

## [Katharine Harer: Two Poems](#) [1]

March 26, 2014 [Honoring Rukeyser](#) [2]

### **the next war**

twirling for the memory of scraps  
gulls scratch marks on the air

a swimmer's arms rise and fall  
leaving a small wake

seals bark questions  
between wooden pilings

cars and trucks, oil-driven toys we love,  
murmur in the dark rooms of their engines  
for more



### **How to Hope**

I'm reading a book on hope  
which sounds like I've taken up tatting  
old fashioned and harmless

hope is unpopular  
even Buddhists diss it telling us to live  
in one awful moment at a time  
and these days almost everyone wants to be a Buddhist

hope is hard to grasp when your imagination's  
grown fat on darkness  
like the thick underside of a mushroom

tragedy is grand scale  
predictably beautiful in its way

## Katharine Harer: Two Poems

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hope is hokey  
imperfect full of stumbling little acts

the way a strand of neighbors standing in the rain  
on the shoulder of Highway One American flags  
in their hands and homemade signs:  
Peace is Patriotic  
can make another strand start up  
even in the imagination

standing on a curve of the coast highway  
where the land seems to fall away  
into the open mouth of the ocean  
their bodies like flags  
waving sloppily  
steadfast in the downpour

*with thanks to Rebecca Solnit for her book, Hope in the Dark*

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### Art Information

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Katharine Harer's poems have been published in literary journals, in newspapers, and on poetry websites. She has written five books of poetry, all published by small presses. Katharine worked as a poet-teacher and as statewide coordinator of the California Poets In the Schools Program, and she served as the director of Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center in San Francisco. For almost a decade, she co-coordinated the popular Poetry & Pizza series in downtown San Francisco.

For the last 36 years, she has taught English and creative writing at Skyline College in San Bruno, California. Katharine loves to perform her work, especially when accompanied by jazz musicians.

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