To me, reading is like breathing; both are essential to life.”

—Patricia C. McKissack

Patricia C. McKissack is the author of The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural, a Newbery Honor Book and winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. She frequently collaborates on books with her husband, Fredrick. They have three sons and four grandchildren, and live in St. Louis, Missouri.
Long before I became a writer, I was a listener and an observer. My relatives, who were dynamic and skilled storytellers, helped develop my listening and observation skills before I could read or write. On hot summer evenings our family would sit on the porch and listen to my grandmother tell a hair-raising ghost story, or my mother would recite Dunbar poems or Bible stories. Sometimes we’d get a real treat when my grandfather would dramatize an episode from his childhood, told in the rich and colorful dialect of the Deep South. I can still hear him beginning a yarn, saying: ‘It was back in nineteen and twenty-seven. I disremember the exact day, but it was long ‘bout July, ’cause the skeeters was bitin’ whole chunks outta my arms....’

As a youngster I had no idea that my heritage would one day be the springboard for my writing career. I grew up, went off to school, majored in English literature, acquired a teaching certificate, and married right after graduation. (They said the marriage wouldn’t last six months... ) I knew then I wanted to be a writer. But the children came—one, and two and three together. Not much time for writing.

My sons grew out of diapers and into size eight shoes; I grew out of size eight jeans and into size twelve business suits. Then, after nine years of teaching junior high and senior high English and after earning a master’s degree in children’s literature, I changed careers and became a children’s book editor. Six years later I became a freelance writer. A year later my husband Fred joined me, and we’ve been writing together since then. On days when I get a rejection slip—oh yes, I still get them—I close up shop and work with my flowers or go antique shopping. Then it’s back to more writing and ‘yesterday’ deadlines.

I write because there’s a clear need for books written about the minority experience in America—fiction and nonfiction. I also write for the love of it!”

Praise for:

PORCH LIES
★ “Draw[s] on African American oral tradition . . . with sly humor, creepy horror . . . and wild force . . . great for sharing on the porch or in the classroom.” —Booklist, Starred

THE DARK-THIRTY
★ “A stellar collection.” —School Library Journal, Starred

MIRANDY AND BROTHER WIND
“A captivating story, with a winning heroine.” —School Library Journal

Book List

THE DARK-THIRTY
Illustrated by Brian Pinkney
Ages 10 up • Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-679-81863-2
(0-679-81863-4)
GLB: 978-0-679-91863-9
(0-679-91863-9)
PB: 978-0-679-89006-5
(0-679-89006-8)
• A Newbery Honor Book
• A Coretta Scott King Author Award Winner
• An ALA Notable Children’s Book
• A CBC–NCSS Notable Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies
• An IRA Teachers’ Choice
• An Illinois Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Award Winner

MIRANDY AND BROTHER WIND
Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
Ages 5–8 • Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-394-88765-4
(0-394-88765-4)
PB: 978-0-679-88333-9
(0-679-88333-9)
• A Caldecott Honor Book
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Illustrated by Dena Schutzer
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Ages 5–12 • Random House
HC: 978-0-307-26501-2
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