



## Christmas Eve



Our  
pud is  
cooked,  
meat stuffed and rolled –  
smells drift of fruit and almonds where  
the cake is iced and waiting  
Our tree is up, green, red and gold,  
and twists of tinsel shimmer there  
from lights illuminating.  
Our foil-wrapped secrets to unfold,  
and tiptoe stockings hung with care,  
are all at once creating,  
a feeling that we want to hold  
suspended in the air –

**it's  
called  
Anticipating**

*Patricia Beer*



PATRICIA BEER

Patricia Beer was born in Exmouth in 1924, the daughter of a railway clerk and a mother who was a member of the Plymouth Brethren. She describes her background vividly in her autobiographical *Mrs Beer's House*. Educated at Exmouth Grammar School, Exeter University and Oxford, she lived in Italy lecturing in English at Padua University, and later taught at Goldsmith's College in London. The legends and landscapes of the West Country form the background for many of her poems, and her historical novel *Moon's Ottery* is set in Elizabethan Devon. As well as her seven collections of poetry and autobiography she published a volume of literary criticism on Victorian fiction, *Reader: I Married Him*. Following her second marriage, she move back to Devon, and lived in Upottery near Honiton until her death in 1999. Death was a subject she returned to constantly in her poems, in particular how the dead haunt the living.