

*Engaging Poems and
Photographs of Florida Animals*

Hanging Out with Wild Animals II

by Cheryl Batavia

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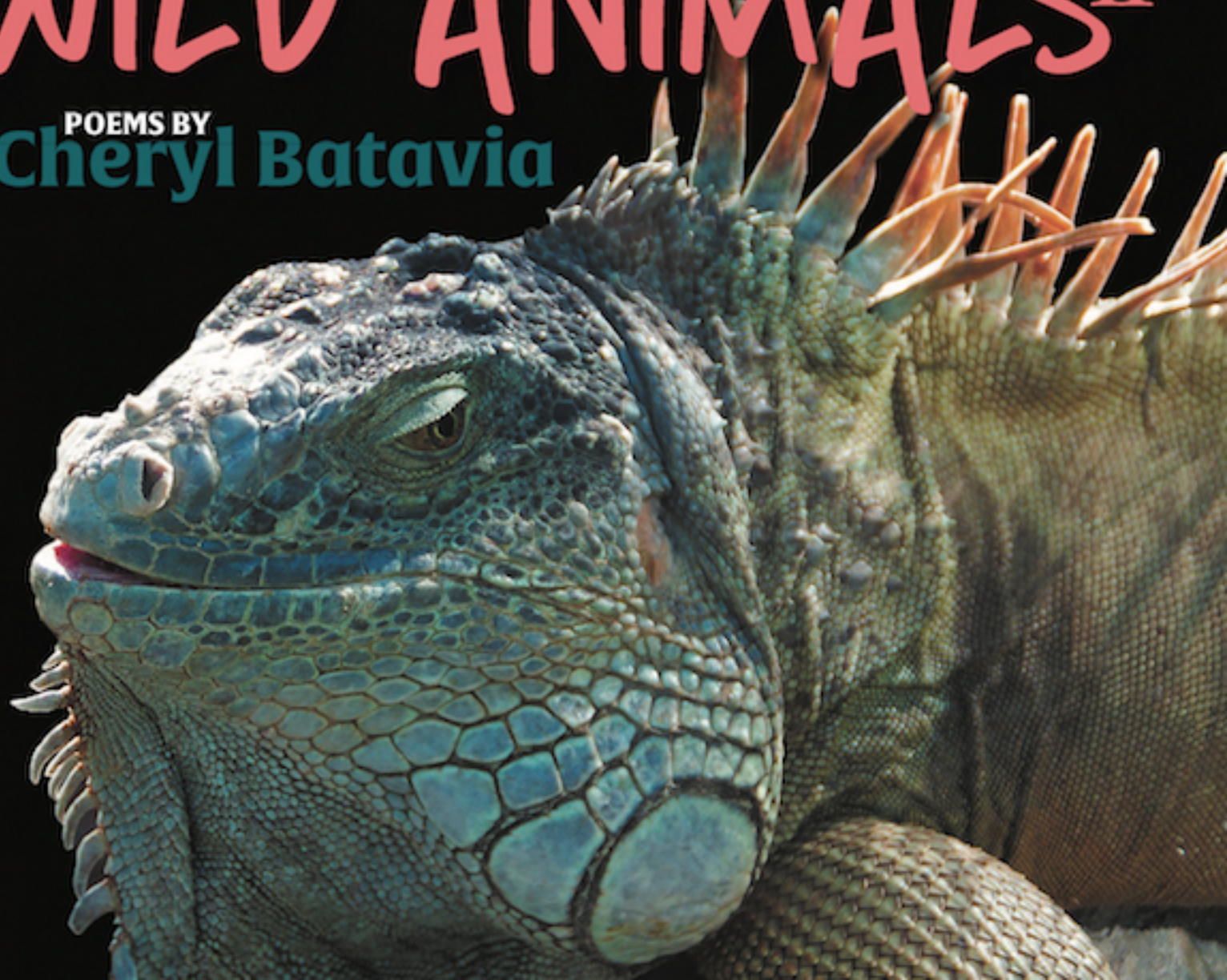
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Hangin' Out with WILD ANIMALS II

POEMS BY
Cheryl Batavia



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Photo of Cheryl Batavia by Joe Batavia.

Printed on Acid Free Paper.

Dedicated
to the memory of my mother,

Marian Rounds Nicholson

She always encouraged me
and shared with me her love of
nature and enjoyment of poetry.



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Iguana's Garden

High in the tree,
Iguana was watching students
place a fish in every hill of corn,
as Native Americans once did.
High in the tree,
Iguana watched them
plant pumpkin seeds and beans
in the three sisters garden.

High in the tree,
Iguana watched the corn
growing tall, beans climbing the
cornstalks, and pumpkin vines
carpeting the ground.
Iguana watched the garden grow.

One morning,
students came to school,
and every green leaf
of the pumpkin vines was gone
from the three sisters garden!
High in the tree,
Iguana burped...and smiled.





Everglades Gossip

A roseate spoonbill was overheard to say,
“You’ll never guess who I saw today!
Gone from the Everglades for a hundred years,
flamingos have settled not far from here.”

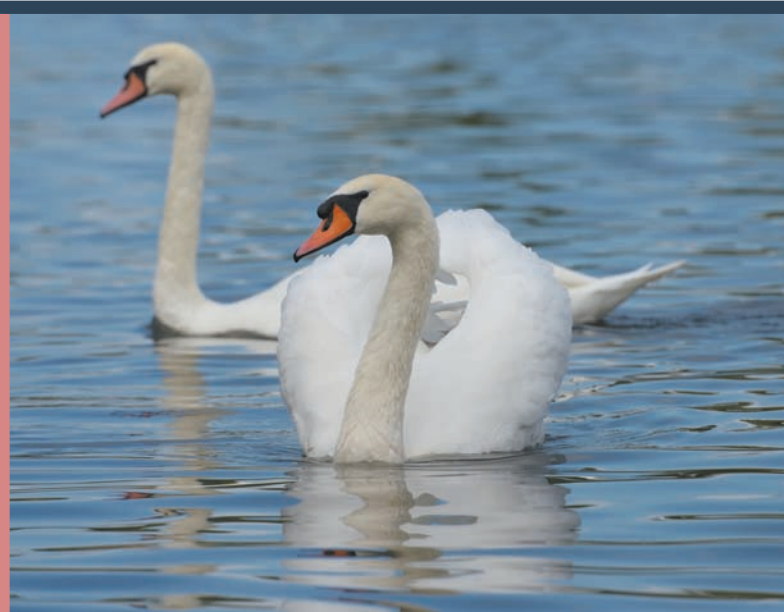
The second spoonbill said, “It will be nice, I think,
having neighbors who also like to wear pink.
Maybe they won’t brag that their legs are longer,
or argue that their beaks are stronger.”

“We will have to be tactful and kind,”
said the first spoonbill, “and pay no mind
to flamingos’ skinny necks and feathery heads.
Some things are better left unsaid.”

“We have a lot in common. Let’s focus on that,”
said the second spoonbill. “We’ll have a chat
with our new neighbors. I think it will be good
to welcome flamingos back to the neighborhood.”

Elegant Swans

Swans glide serenely on water,
icons of grace and beauty,
reflected in the garden pool,
celebrated in songs and stories,
immortalized in paintings and
sculpture. But somehow,
as I watch you, swans,
I feel that you are swimming
just for me.





Florida Panther

An eerie sound like a baby crying sent shivers down my spine— Florida panthers kept us awake all night as we camped on a back road in our new 1960 Nash Rambler station wagon on a family road trip to the Florida Keys.

Two-lane highways and bridges, bologna sandwiches, a carton of milk, setting off firecrackers far from civilization...and that eerie cry. I didn't see a Florida panther back then, when I was eleven.

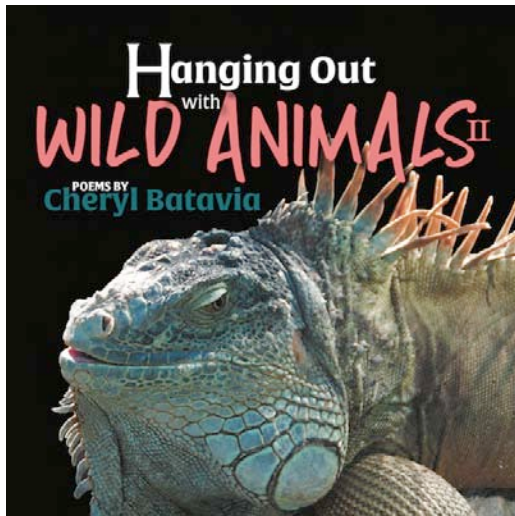
Today, Florida panthers, sleek and magnificent, look back at us from their enclosures at the zoo... the alligator farm...and the wildlife park...still the symbol of Florida.

High fences are going up along Alligator Alley to protect panther habitat from what is now a four-lane highway. I may never see a Florida Panther in the wild, but I'm happy they're still out there.

Gift from My Family

A bucket of glowing water,
bioluminescent jellyfish,
like fireflies in a jar,
a gift of shared discovery
from my children and their father...
Jellyfish scooped from a little lake
on the Miami Beach golf course
where they walked in the evening,
jellyfish gently returned to the lake
after they brightened my night.





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