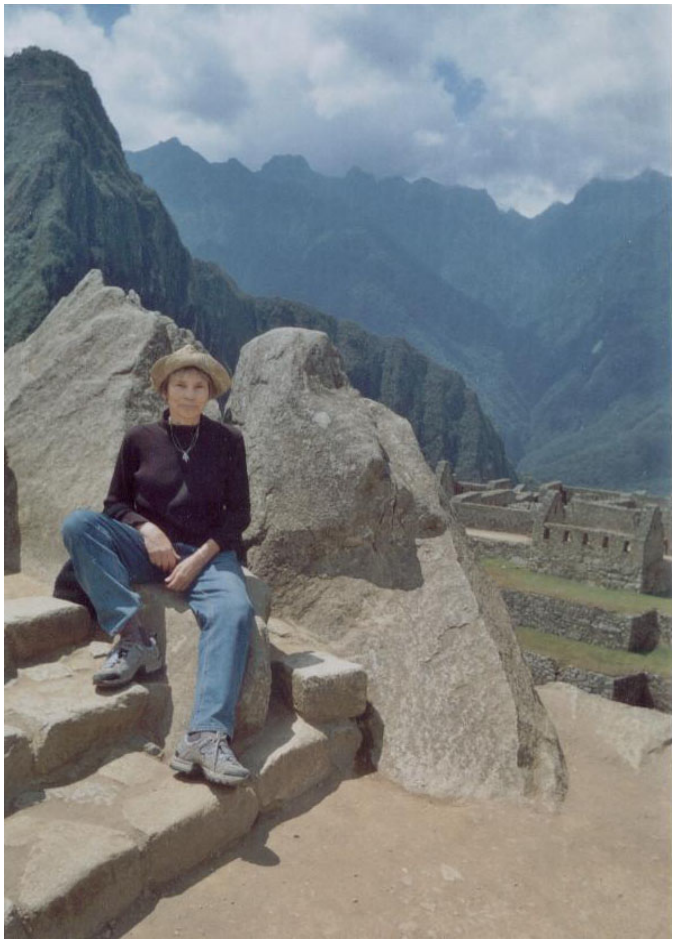

ASHEVILLE—A sense of place is central to the work of Katherine Soniat, a widely published poet who will lead a Saturday poetry workshop at this year's Fall Conference. Her extensive travels have allowed her to immerse herself in various cultures so that they become transformative filters for more personal contexts.

Crete, the Andes, the Bavarian Alps, and the Grand Canyon are a few of these regions she has included in her writing. Expanding the focus of poetry in such a way allows threads of art, myth, history, geography, and geology to inform her collections, shaping sequences of poems that resonate across a broad but personal spectrum.

Originally from New Orleans, Soniat has taught at the University of New Orleans, Hollins University, and for twenty years was on the faculty at Virginia Tech. Her fifth collection of

poems, *The Swing Girl* , is forthcoming from Louisiana State University Press, and a sixth collection, *A Raft, A Boat, A Bridge* , will be published by Dream Horse Press in the fall of 2012.

Her upcoming workshop is titled “Poetry, Archetypal Imagery, and You: A Writing Workshop.”

“What is an archetype?” Soniat asks. “How might it relate to who you are in this grand universe? Does the world have an imagistic language in which it speaks to us across time?

“If you participate in this workshop, you will probably find that indeed there are certain images that are almost old as the Earth itself, and that your life is also encased in those archetypes. AND (this one is important!) that we also create new personal archetypes to guide us into the future. Lots to think and write about.

“If you decide to join us: Please bring a photo of people in a situation that you are familiar with. Bring a second picture (not necessarily a photograph) of people you do not know in a situation/circumstance that you do not fully understand. You are simple drawn to this picture for some unknown reason. In other words, there is an interesting ambiguity in this picture that acts as a magnet. This second image can come from a magazine, the newspaper, whatever.

“We will enter through the gateway of these two images into the world of archetypes then see if those images speak to each other, if they inform one another in a fresh and vivid manner. Of course, they will “in form” YOU in the most surprising ways. You leave this workshop with a poem to remind you of the time we spent considering archetypal imagery.”

Photography, use of archetypal imagery, and dream work are also special areas of interest in both Soniat’s teaching and in her writing. She now lives on a ravine with one frequently noted bear (the Kenilworth Bear) in Asheville and teaches in the Great Smokies Writers' Program at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

Registration for the 2011 Fall Conference, Nov 18-20, hosted by the North Carolina Writers’ Network, will open in September. Keep an eye on www.ncwriters.org for more details.