

## ARTS &amp; LIFE

## THE CITIZEN QUIZ

## On Barcelona, hybrid vampires and kisses that scramble the brain

Patricia K. McCarthy, the author of three books of vampire erotica set in Ottawa, answers the probing and at times curious questions of the *Citizen* quiz. Her third book, *The Crimson Woman*, was released recently, and is available online at [patriciaKmcCarthy.com](http://patriciaKmcCarthy.com) or at Ottawa's independent bookstores.

**Q:** Tell us one thing you learned in the past year.

**A:** Arousal and crowded buses don't mix. And that's all I'm at liberty to reveal.

**Q:** Where are you right now, and why?

**A:** Ah shucks — I'm at a phenomenal period in my life: young, healthy, happy and able to pursue my dreams. I feel particularly blessed because I have generous family and friends who have patiently endured endless conversations about my writing (all the while resisting the urge to drown me).

**Q:** Where do you live?

**A:** In the seemingly innocuous neighbourhood of Sandy Hill, in Ottawa's east end, where in fact hybrid vampires and the one and only vampire on Earth are seducing nubile girls on secluded paths.

**Q:** If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

**A:** For one summer, I would love to set up my pup tent in Barcelona where I could fall in lust with a dark-haired Spanish artist who would inspire a new series of novels.

**Q:** What's the last good book you read?

**A:** *Sunset Gun*, poems by Dorothy Parker (subtle, timeless)

**Q:** The last good movie?

**A:** *Bernard and Doris* (stellar acting on a shoestring budget)

**Q:** The last good CD?

**A:** *Hybrid* by Elsiane (superlative).

**Q:** What's your favourite TV show?

**A:** *Deadwood*. The characters are foul-mouthed, unprincipled, conniving, rude and deliciously crude — every flaw I would avoid in real people but which work like a charm in TV-land.

**Q:** Tell us about your last great meal.

**A:** Puff pastries stuffed with



Author Patricia K. McCarthy says eating pasta and spicy sauce gives her pleasure and guilt in equal portions.

baked brie and served on a plate smeared with mango chutney and roasted red pepper agnolotti in a rosé sauce topped with herbed ricotta cheese, washed down with a delightful Pinot — courtesy of the Black Tomato on George Street in Ottawa's Byward Market. Special diet be damned!

**Q:** What happens when you die?

**A:** At the Gates of Heaven, St. Peter presents me with a bottomless basket of the finest, 70-percent pure, dark fair-trade chocolate. As I suck on succulent squares, all the men, publishers, literary agents and employers profess their most humble apologies, "I'm terribly sorry! I never should have rejected you! It was the worst mistake of my life!"

**Q:** What do you think when you hear the word "Ottawa"?

**A:** Beaver Tails smothered in cinnamon and lemon juice, and ancient skates as I traverse the length of the canal at midnight when the ice is like a sheet of glass. Really.

**Q:** What book do you wish you'd written?

**A:** *Journey of the Magi: In Search of the Birth of Jesus* by Paul

William Roberts. Tears soaked my cheeks in laughter. I realized while savouring his elegant prose that I have a long road to travel where writing is concerned.

**Q:** If you weren't an artist, what would you be?

**A:** Depressed. Forlorn. Impossible.

**Q:** Describe your best moment on stage, to date. Your worst moment on stage ...

**A:** Best moment just took place at my book launch party for my third novel, *The Crimson Woman*. I chose to read a chapter that was considered gutsy while my audience looked on with anticipation. Worst moment, hands down, occurred in a noisy Russian bar. I felt like Diane Keaton in *Annie Hall*. Maybe one person actually listened.

**Q:** Were you a good kid, or a brat?

**A:** I was a trouble-maker from the get go, playing hooky in kindergarten and telling wonderful lies to my teachers. Evidently I had a desire to craft fictional tales from an early age.

**Q:** When will the Senators win the Cup?

**A:** When they stop playing like gentlemen and start playing like warriors!

**Q:** What gadget or technology can you not live without?

**A:** Admittedly, I'm fond of the convenience of electricity — helps to be able to read and write at night with a bright, energy-saving light. Thank you, Mr. Franklin!

**Q:** Is "happiness" a state or an ideal?

**A:** Ideals are illusions. Happiness is the art of being.

**Q:** Global warming — fact or fiction?

**A:** How many more tornadoes, tsunamis, hurricanes and other environmental calamities need to occur before the world acknowledges their preponderance is not simply a coincidence?

**Q:** What's your guilty pleasure?

**A:** No question — pasta and spicy sauce give me pleasure and guilt in equal portions.

**Q:** What's your favourite body part?

**A:** A man's luscious lips before he presses upon me a kiss that scrambles my brain.