



# Breathing Room

*Patricia Elam*

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## **Breathing Room** Patricia Elam

In her dazzling debut novel, award-winning author Patricia Elam takes us into the lives of two completely different women whose friendship has helped them weather just about everything. But now they're at a crossroads where understanding may not be enough -- a place where they must risk it all to rediscover what they cherish most.

Photographer Norma Simmons-Greer has a loving husband, a lively young son, and an upper-middle-class lifestyle. Probation officer Moxie Dilliard is as dedicated to her ideals as she is to her talented teenage daughter, Zadi. Best friends after meeting in college, Norma and Moxie are each other's reality check and reassurance.

But suddenly the bond between them begins to unravel in unexpected ways. Anguished over the loss of her second child and her husband's recent withdrawal, Norma takes refuge in a complex love affair that puts her at odds with Moxie -- and with herself. Haunted by her beloved mother's inspiring yet disturbing emotional legacy, Moxie struggles to understand her friend, while her own refusal to compromise threatens to shatter her relationship with Zadi. And a devastating crisis will challenge both women to face the hardest of truths. With insight, humor, and heartbreaking immediacy, Patricia Elam presents a beautifully written portrait of two unforgettable women, and the teenager they both cherish, as they negotiate the ever-shifting terrain of friendship and identity. A wise, tender novel of what love can and cannot survive, *Breathing Room* is also an exploration of how the past can at once inspire and limit us, and of the pain -- and promise -- that accompany us on the journey we all share.

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