Newsletter

of the

Katherine Anne Porter

Society

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Remembering Katherine Anne Porter at the University of Maryland

On May 23, 2014, the University of Maryland Libraries hosted a program entitled "Katherine Porter in Letters and Life." Scheduled to coincide with the annual conference of the American Literature Association then taking place in Washington, D.C., the program included a presentation by Trevor Munoz and Elizabeth DePriest, members of the staff of the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project (http://digital.lib.umd.edu/kap) that has digitized approximately 2,000 of Porter's letters to her family written between 1905 and 1977. In addition, Mary Winslow Poole, Jane Krause DeMouy, and Ted Wojtasik participated in a panel, moderated by Beth Alvarez, exploring their personal relationships with Porter. What follows is an edited transcription of the panel discussion.

Beth Alvarez: The fact that the 2014 American Literature Association conference was scheduled to take place in Washington, D.C., provided an opportunity. At the Katherine Anne Porter Society business meeting in 2013, those in attendance all agreed that it would be an opportunity to visit College Park. I started to think about putting together a program. It seemed natural that we present something about the digital project on which we are working, but, then, I also remembered that there are still people around who knew Porter, some of whom I had never met and would like to meet. So there was an opportunity to see what we could do to set up such a program. These three people, one of whom I know quite well and the other two I didn't know at all previously, graciously agreed to give some of their recollections. Each of them will explain how they met Porter, a bit about their relationship, and share some anecdotes about their relationship with her. They are going to speak in the order in which, I believe, they met Porter.

Katherine Anne Porter in the garden at 3106 P Street, Georgetown, Washington, D.C., July 1944. This is the residence she shared with Marcella Winslow and her children, Mary and John. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

The first of these is Mary Winslow Poole. She has spent most of her life in Washington. She has a master's degree from Georgetown University and lived three years in Italy, the last year on a Fullbright teaching

Katherine Anne Porter Society Newsletter

Members are welcome to submit articles, announcements, and comments for the society's newsletter. Please send them to Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts Emerita, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD 20742, alvarez@umd.edu, and/or Christine Grogan, President of the Katherine Anne Porter Society, clg5579@psu.edu. Society membership inquiries should be directed to Beth Alvarez. Entries for the annual bibliographical essay on Porter should be addressed to Christine Grogan.

The newsletter of the Katherine Anne Porter Society is published at the University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, Maryland.

fellowship at the University of Florence. She married in 1965, and, once the two children were old enough, she joined the faculty of Washington International School where she taught English literature for 23 years, mainly in the International baccalaureate program for 11th and 12th graders. While at the school she was also a university counselor for 13 years. She retired in 2002 and now enjoys teaching in the Lifelong Learning Institute at American University.

The person who met Porter second of the three is Jane Krause DeMouy—most of us know her from the reputation of her book on Porter, *Katherine Anne Porter's Women: The Eye of Her Fiction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983). A Katherine Anne Porter scholar, she retired from teaching in 1984. Since then she has worked as a journalist for National Public Radio, a feature writer for newspapers and magazines, and a science writer and editor at the National Institutes of Health. She received her B.A. from Notre Dame of Maryland University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

And, finally, Ted Wojtasik was born and reared in Connecticut and is a visiting faculty member of English and creative writing at St. Andrews University in Laurinburg, North Carolina. He holds a B.A. in philosophy from George Washington University, an M.F.A. in fiction writing from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in English from the University of South Carolina. He's the author of three novels: *No Strange Fire*, published in 1996, *Collage*, 2004, and *Wild Animal Nation*, 2006, and has published short stories in various literary journals, most recently in the *Cold Mountain Review*.

Mary Winslow Poole: I first came to know Katherine Anne Porter when I was eight years old. This is a stretch of memory here. In January 1944, she had been invited to Washington to take John Peale Bishop's place at the Library of Congress. He was ill; in fact, he died shortly afterwards. And she was supposed to live with Allen Tate and his wife Caroline Gordon in Anacostia. Of course, at that time, housing was very, very scarce. And that didn't work out; that is to say Katherine Anne and the Tates. Because she painted his portrait, my mother knew Allen Tate, who asked if Katherine Anne could come and stay in our unused, or our guest room, I guess you could call it—that's a very highfalutin term for it. The spare room, let's call it that, on the third floor. This was one of these narrow Victorian houses that are in Georgetown. It was on P Street. Those of you who know Georgetown—it was not the way it is now—very, very elegant. It wasn't at the time.

Our mother—I'm going to say *our* because my brother is sitting right there, so it's not just myself. She had, with her usual luck, found this house to rent for $89 a month when our father went overseas in 1943. So she was delighted to take in Katherine Anne in April 1944 because Katherine Anne gave her $60 a month for room

and board. Now a little bit about the house: there was one bathroom, very small that was sort of stuck on the house itself above the kitchen that looked out into the backyard. It also had a coal furnace; it was one of the last Georgetown houses to have a coal furnace. Our mother had to learn to stoke the furnace, shovel the coal, and things like that.

Anyway, Katherine Anne moved in, and we all loved hearing her stories and eating her food. And whenever she and I met subsequently she would always say that she and I had had the mumps together because, in fact, I really did have the mumps and was feverish and delirious and all that. At the same time, Katherine Anne was having one of her bronchial spells—her frequent troubles, as you know—possibly she had swollen glands, but I doubt it was full-fledged mumps. During the period when we were ill, our mother had gone off to West Point to paint the Superintendent of West Point and left her mother—our grandmother—in charge. So some of the Porter letters that I found in our attic are written to our maternal grandmother who got to know Katherine Anne when she was running up and down nursing me on the second floor and Katherine Anne on the third floor.

Katherine Anne loved saying that we had had the mumps together. I don't have the original of this letter, maybe it's here [in Porter's papers at the University of Maryland]. I don't know. It's a letter that she wrote to me in November 1944 with a drawing—I evidently had drawn a picture for her and wrote a letter to her—and this is a drawing of herself in one of these hospital beds that you crank up, and she's all squinched up like that, and she says, "your picture's prettier but mine is more like the shape I get into when they wind up the handle up at the foot of the bed." And so on.

As we've just heard, of course, she was an aggressive letter writer, and I was really very touched looking through these letters how she always mentions my brother and me at the end of the letters. Of course, she was tremendously interested in children and didn't have any of her own, as you know, but was very fond of them, and that's sort of a nice thing. Among these letters, I found something that I didn't even know existed, and that is a beautiful condolence letter that Katherine Anne wrote to our mother when our father died in February 1945 after the Battle of the Bulge. And then some odds and ends. A tiny little note saying she was definitely going to come to my wedding, but, of course, she never did. And that's really all I have unless you want me to tell a story, an anecdote.

It just so happens that our mother, who was a keeper, kept the telegram, which documents the following incident —perhaps I should tell the anecdote by reading my mother's words from her *Brushes with the Literary: Letters of a Washington Artist 1943-1959* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993). This took place in 1953. I was in high school, and my cousin from California was visiting. In the letter, our mother first writes about having taken Katherine Anne to see Ezra Pound and how Porter wanted to come again and spend more time with him. However, instead of this visit that they had arranged, Katherine Anne wired that she could only come for her reading at the Corcoran and was so tired that she would have to go to the Willard Hotel (that's the content of this telegram) so she could get some rest after the reading and get back early to New York to start her radio broadcasts of poetry readings.

Ted Wojtasik, Jane Krause DeMouy, and Mary Winslow Poole, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, May 23, 2014. Photograph by Roy Alvarez.

These are our mother's words:

> She read for two hours and mesmerized her audience at the Corcoran. She looked beautiful in a gray organdy dress with a voluminous skirt. . . . There was a party for her at a house on Sheridan Circle after the reading, with champagne and Justice Douglas, at which Katherine Anne was so up in the clouds, after the sensational performance, that she spilled champagne on the gorgeous dress. She says it is ruined.
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> The following day Katherine Anne had promised to come to lunch. She wanted to autograph the three books she had sent airmail just before she came "so that Mary and Johnny could have them 30 years from now" and then I had said I would take her to her train.
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> She called at 10:45 to say she was pulling herself together to get here in time for the 1 o'clock train to New York. At 12:30 I phoned the Willard Hotel, since she had not come, and they said she was still registered but did not answer the phone which rather alarmed me. I asked them to investigate. Just as they called to say that she had checked out at 12:20, she arrived. She had given the taxi driver the wrong address, and, of course, was out of breath and not hungry—until I said "crabmeat casserole," upon which she stayed and had two helpings. Then suddenly, she remembered that she had told Mary McGrory [MWP: for those of you who don't know, Mary McGrory was quite a well-known journalist for the *Evening Star* at that time] that the only time she could give her an interview was at the railroad station at 12:45. She had become so interested in telling the young girls (who were hanging on every word) how she had written her story "That Tree" that we almost missed the 2 p. m. to New York—especially since she had neglected to tell me her bags were still at the Willard. For her overnight trip she had brought a very large hand trunk which, I presume was necessary for the gray organdy, now ruined.
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> As I rested exhausted upon my return, I had a phone call from Mary McGrory, frustrated and exhausted as well. I gave her a vivid description of why Katherine Anne had not turned up for the promised interview.
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> Katherine Anne had left mumbling about a return trip for a "pleasure visit," which she invariably says, and never makes, for all the reasons given above. (*Brushes with the Literary*, pp. 337-338)

Jane Krause DeMouy: Well I met Katherine Anne much, much later. She was 88, I think at the time when I became acquainted with her, and had already had a series of strokes, but she was bedridden. She was paralyzed on her right side, and she had trouble with speech. She also, at that point in her life, had turned against a lot of the people who had been her dear friends and who had helped her and been part of her life for years and years. I learned subsequently that when a person has a stroke it can have an effect on personality, and I suspect she had had this experience. So she really was rather isolated in her apartment in Prince George's County. There was a little note on the door that said, "Please do not knock on my door. I am very tired and I don't wish to be disturbed." But I was able to get in because she was acquainted with my mentor and the then-president of the university where I received my undergraduate degree. So they invited me. They were going to visit her, she had spoken at the university, and they became friends. My mentor, who was a poet, had written several poems about the experience with Porter. So they invited me to come and meet them there, and I went on a Saturday afternoon and was introduced to her as someone who had just finished a book about her, my dissertation. Porter asked, "Where is it?" And I said, "It's in the car." I don't know why I put it in the car, but it was there. Maybe it was for moral courage, but anyway it was in the car. And she said, "Well go get it. I'll give you 15 minutes." And

so I roared out. I didn't know her from Adam. I didn't know what to expect or how to behave, but I came to find out these were very characteristic behaviors on her part. She was witty; she was charming; she was very engaged with whoever was there. She loved to know that you were involved with her or her work and really enjoyed experiencing your knowledge of her and your interest in her in any way that she could. She was also very generous. I brought my dissertation in, and I read her a sentence or two. She said "Oh this is good stuff; this is really good stuff." And I was thrilled; I could have fainted. But the best part was that at the end of the visit, she said she would really like me to come back and read to her some more.

So from that time forward, I went back weekly to visit with her in her lonely apartment. It was two apartments that were strung together so that she had space to entertain when she was still well enough to do so. So I would go back, and I would read to her and tell her various things about what I was working on and why I thought this, that, or the other thing. And it developed into a real friendship. I came to love her dearly. And she said she loved me too. She would always say, "Oh darling. I really love you. You know I do." And I would say, "Katherine Anne, I love you, too." I remember vividly—that's one of the things that nobody would have to refer to notes to remember a story like this but—I had written something in my introductory chapter about the fact that Helene Deutsch, who was a famous psychoanalyst at the time and had been a colleague of Freud's, had written a book. I think she was the first psychoanalyst to write a book on the psychology of women. I guess people previously didn't think there was one. But in any case, she had a theory about the fact that there were some women who suffered from duality and that meant that they had feminine aspects about them, but they also were interested in the arts, and they were interested in working and doing other things that were much more independent. And I looked at Katherine Anne and I said, "You know, she's talking about us." And she said, "Yes, honey, but we're good looking."

She never failed to amaze you. She repeated over and over again the fact that her feistiness was something that was very important. She said, "You have to be a scrapper. I don't mean that you have to go around and fight with everybody but you have to stand up for yourself. You must be a scrapper." And when she lectured me it was always please believe in yourself, believe in your work, and she really wanted to help me. She talked to me constantly about getting this dissertation published, which eventually it was. But she was so generous. She said, "I've seen a lot of this stuff, and this is good." But she was very engaged with you, whoever you were, and what you were doing, but especially if you were involved with her and her work.

She loved cats as I think some of you must know. I have a picture she gave me where—I think it was from the forties—she's sitting at her typewriter and the cat of the day—the cat du jour—was sitting on her shoulders while she was writing. And of course there were no animals allowed in her apartment. I had a cat at home, and I put the cat in the cat carrier and carried her over there occasionally so that Katherine Anne could enjoy having cat company. And she just loved it. The cat, of course, would jump out on the bed and scoot, but she just adored the fact that the cat was there, just at all. She apparently loved both cats and horses very much, and she talked to me about that over time.

As I said, she was always encouraging me and my work, and one day I said to her that I had to leave; I'm sorry I had to go so soon, but I really needed to go home. I was going to go home and write, and she said, "You go and do your work. It'll clean your soul." And I've never forgotten that either. That was certainly a truism.

She was necessarily very incapacitated. There was not much she could do for herself. And so I would occasionally try to write a letter for her, certainly read to her, and, in the course of things, I would ask her about pictures and her room, questions that I had about her life or her writing. And at one point she began to tell me stories about her family, things that she remembered. It

seems to me as people age, they tend to remember more the things that happened a long time ago rather than the things that happened yesterday—although she was pretty good at that, too. She talked about her family. She talked about her relationship to her grandmother who was a model for Katherine Anne. Katherine Anne took her name although her grandmother's name was spelled with a C, but she was known as Aunt Cat in the neighborhood. She was very devoted to her grandmother, loved her very much, and modeled herself after her because her grandmother was a tough old lady who knew what she wanted, knew who she was, and really didn't let anybody stand in her way if she wanted something. I think Katherine Anne, in adopting her name, was identifying herself with this very strong woman that had been a model for her when her mother was dead.

And she told me an interesting story one time about her grandmother in the Civil War. She said we always talk about the Great War, and of course she had written "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" about her experience during that time. She said, "There's so many wars." And she said, "I remember when the Civil War happened." I don't think she referred to it as the Civil War but that's what she was talking about. She talked about how her grandmother would make a big breakfast for all the young men who were leaving that day. And she would carry it out to them, seated on horseback. And they would eat it on horseback. And she had made a blanket for each of them as they went off. And they would strap the blanket to the back of the horse, behind the saddle, and off they went. And I think there was one young man who didn't return and the story was that he was buried in the blanket that Catharine Ann—the original Catharine Ann—had made for him.

She was very involved in all this history, some of it not in her own experience but through her grandmother, through the family lore that got passed along. I think it's not surprising that when she reached adulthood she told stories about her childhood and how she was raised and so forth that weren't completely true, verifiable, as Darlene [Unrue] and Joan Givner discovered when they got into the research. Nevertheless, I think it was all mixed up with myth and memory. Those of you who've read her and read about her know they were two very important and significant issues for her.

She told about some of the experiences that she had in writing her stories, what she thought about individual people. And one that stuck with me particularly was when she was at the University of Michigan, I guess, the postcard from her to [her nephew] Paul was very telling because this was the time she was writer-in-residence there. She happened to meet Theodore Roethke on campus. I think he introduced himself, told her that he was a poet and that he had read her stories and just loved them. And she was, of course, just thrilled to hear this. While they were talking, he pulled out of his coat pocket this dog-eared copy of three of her stories. It was probably *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. She was so delighted to see this that every time she saw him thereafter when they passed on campus she would say to him, "Where am I?" And he would say, "In my pocket." She did engage with people and, as I said, spent a lot of time trying to encourage people in their own work and was always generous with it.

One last little story, well actually I have two. She told a story about when she went to Paris. She was quite a cook and really renowned for her cooking. She encouraged me to learn to be a good cook because then people will say you are a good cook, and they won't have to say you're a good writer. Anyway, she was a good cook. She was a wonderful cook. And I think there are people in this room who could tell you exactly how good she was. She talked about going to France, and I think she went to Cordon Bleu and studied there for awhile and enjoyed what she learned. She said, "I talked to this French chef and I said to him that I wanted to learn to make wild boar." And she said, "I told him I wanted him to teach me everything from the first step through the last." And he looked at me very seriously, and he said, "Well, you know what the first step will have to be." And she said, "No." And he said, "You will have to catch him." She thought that was hysterical. She really enjoyed a good joke and enjoyed sharing it with people.

On another note, and I don't know that it's so good to end on this note. I think it's an important piece of her personality that is often overlooked. There's a lot of talk about the fact that she suffered from depressions, serious depressions in the course of her lifetime, sometimes for unknown reasons. There was one morning when I came, and she had a big volume of the complete poems of the British poet Stevie Smith published by Oxford University Press. She pointed out that Smith was a poet she had long felt in tune with, and she first came across her work in a magazine that she was reading in the presence of her nephew Paul. She came across the poem "Not Waving but Drowning" and was completely taken with it because it so aptly expressed what she had always felt. She was startled by it and showed it to Paul who, according to KAP, was too obtuse to understand what she saw in it. Now remember this was after she had decided that he was no good because she had had strokes, and he had had to take over as her guardian. She never quite adjusted to that. As she described it, he rather ridiculed the poem and inadvertently her feelings associated with it. To read it is to understand how hard that must have been for her.

[JKD read "Not Waving but Drowning" by Stevie Smith.]

That was a piece of her too, and I think it's worth mentioning so that we remember that she was a very complex lady and one who in spite of all that depression and the way she had to struggle with all of those things managed to bring herself up and be present to others to encourage their writing, to encourage them in their work, and to have a wonderful, lovely personality. She said that one friend had said of her, "You know why I like you?" "You always know who you want to shoot."

Ted Wojtasik: I met Katherine Anne Porter through Rhea Johnson. I had just met Rhea Johnson through another friend, so it was just a friend of a friend. I went out to College Park in the strange, mirrored apartments with that sign on the door. Rhea introduced me to her. I had never really read her work before. I just started reading it. I went there on July 10, 1979. After I got back and because I like to read letters, I thought wouldn't it be nice to put together a collection of her letters. So I suggested that to Rhea, and he suggested it to Katherine Anne Porter. She agreed, and that became my reason for weekly visits. I was coming here to the University of Maryland to copy letters and to go back with them to her so she could identify people for me. We read her letters together. I was 23 years old, so I was a kid just out of college, and I knew that I wasn't going to be the editor. I would simply do the research, the work. I had written to Robert Penn Warren to ask him if he wanted to be the editor, and that started an epistolary relationship with him, but it eventually fell apart. But then at that point [Porter and I] had already been seeing each other and becoming friends. And you know you fall in love with Katherine Anne Porter. Eventually I met Monroe Wheeler, who was an important figure for me, and then Glenway Wescott, on whose novels I did my dissertation. Everything is connected.

Porter and I used to exchange books. Flannery O'Connor's *The Habit of Being* had just come out, so I bought her a copy. Sure enough I have just seen in her library in the Katherine Anne Porter Room the copy I had given to her. I want to talk about serendipity, meeting these various people, especially about Mary de Rachewiltz, Ezra Pound's daughter. She's a translator; she's a poet; she's a scholar. She's Ezra Pound's biological daughter, and I'd become very close with the family. What's curious to me is that in 1949 Katherine Anne Porter was a judge on a panel of 14 for the first Bolligen Library of Congress Award for Poetry. The award is no longer associated with the Library of Congress, because the judges voted to give the first award to Ezra Pound for *The Pisan Cantos*. That caused an uproar in the literary world, and Porter was just swept into it. But what's curious is that I meet Katherine Anne Porter, who was one of 14 judges to give Mary's father the first Bolligen Award. And it was serendipity once again. These connections that happen.

Katherine Anne always supported Ezra Pound, and so I think I'll probably discuss this at the forthcoming Ezra Pound conference, her never-

ending support for Ezra Pound. In her 1950 review of his collected letters, she claimed that there were five writers that influenced her or meant most to her: Henry James, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, Thomas Stearns Eliot, and Ezra Pound. In that review, she recalled reading Pound with Hart Crane during that turbulent period in Mexico [1931]. From April 1934 to October 1936, she then actually lived in the same house in Paris where Ezra Pound lived for 5 years. In 1949, she voted for Pound for the Bolligen Prize, and then she did go visit him at St. Elizabeths in 1953. She received the Emerson/Thoreau Gold Medal Award in 1967. In 1972, Ezra Pound was nominated for the award and was going to receive it, but the board of directors of what's now the American Academy of Arts and Letters overturned the nomination. Porter returned her medal to the organization in protest of the treatment of Pound—they could not separate Pound the poet from Pound the man. Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Katherine Anne Porter, and Ezra Pound himself were part of the New Critical movement, and the whole point was to not identify the work with the writer, the affective [fallacy]. So I understood how she could separate all the business with treason and the trial of Mussolini from the poet's work itself. So she was always supportive.

When I was visiting Porter regularly, I would bring books, and I would read to her. I was reading Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* to her in Silver Spring. I had the unfortunate experience of watching my mother decline into dementia and Alzheimer's. By the time I met Porter, she had suffered the strokes and was bedridden. Yet, you can't say she had Alzheimer's because she knew who you were, she could recall memory. She would take books of mine and underline things in them. There was a misspelling of *priggishness* in an essay in one of them, and she corrected it by adding the missing R; so there was a lucidity there.

She and I would exchange books back and forth. And so the Flannery O'Connor book is upstairs. What I'd like to do is formally donate her copy of *Writers at Work, The Paris Review Interviews, Third Series* [Edited by George Plimpton, Introduced by Alfred Kazin. New York: Viking Press, 1967]. I've had this for 35 years. I'll close by reading some of her annotations in it. In the Norman Mailer interview, the interviewer asks Mailer questions: "What do you feel about other kinds of writing you have done and are doing? How do they stand in relation to your work as a novelist?" Mailer: "The essays?" Interviewer: "Yes, journalism essays." Mailer: "Well you know there was a time when I wanted very much to belong to the literary world. I wanted to be respected the way someone like Katherine Anne Porter used to be respected." Interviewer: "How do you think she was respected?" Mailer: "The way a cardinal is respected—weak people get to their knees when the cardinal walks by." Katherine Anne underlined "used to be respected" and put a question mark in the margin. And then at the very back of the book she wrote another paragraph. There are actually quite a lot of her annotations throughout.

Beth Alvarez: Yes, I can see. I'm trying to read what's in that interview. Her handwriting is so good, Ted.

Ted Wojtasik: Yes, this is 1974.

Beth Alvarez: This is a copy she gave you.

Ted Wojtasik: Yes, we would exchange books back and forth.

Beth Alvarez: So it wasn't annotated in 1979.

Ted Wojtasik: No, no, no. This was written in 1974.

Beth Alvarez: Because that's her handwriting.

Ted Wojtasik: Yes, that's her handwriting. Well, this is her book so I'm returning it 35 years later! [TW reads]: "Two Beings in this Book: Jean Cocteau and Lillian Hellman. The rest are just people, or 'Worm fodder' to fill graves, as Ford Madox Ford said to me once--Lillian Hellman and Jean Cocteau are on surface so unlike they might have strayed to this world from two different planets--left to themselves with no interference from the people, they would

have known each other on sight, in silence.
K.A.P. August 10, 1974"
Put that back in Porter's library. (Hands book to Beth Alvarez.)

Beth Alvarez: Before we close, we actually have another person who knew Katherine Anne quite well here with us this evening—the distinguished lawyer E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., who actually served as a specialist assistant to Robert F. Kennedy and as an aide to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. For us, he was Katherine Anne Porter's lawyer and friend and served as the executor of her will. So Barrett, if you'd like to add anything, we'd love for you to do so.

E. Barrett Prettyman: The only thing I'll add is the true story of how I met her. I had just finished reading *Ship of Fools* and had also read a lot of the criticisms of it, which I thought were wrong. And I thought, "Now, I ought to tell her that I think these criticisms are wrong." And I looked in the phonebook for a K. A. Porter and found one living in Georgetown and called it. It was almost 10 o'clock at night so I began the conversation by apologizing for it, the lateness of the hour. I said, "Are you the one who wrote *Ship of Fools*?" And she said, "Yes, I am." And I then told her what I thought was wrong with some of the criticisms, and, in the conversation, it was very weird because that brought her very upbeat, but I could tell in the background that she was despondent, seriously despondent. I mean to the point where she was thinking of taking her own life, despondent. And finally I said to her, "Ms. Porter, Don't you think I ought to come see you?" And she said, "Oh, yes. Tomorrow morning for breakfast." And that's how I met her. And that resulted in a lifelong relationship.

I'll just tell you one other short vignette. Justice Harlan of the Supreme Court told me that he was sitting next to Katherine Anne one time, and she was complaining about the fact that she couldn't get a codicil written to her will. And he said, "I thought you knew Barrett Prettyman." And she looked surprised, and she said, "Well, yes, of course I do." And he said, "Well, don't you know that he's a lawyer, a good one?" And she said, "Well, I just never thought of him in that way." And she wrote me, and that resulted in not only codicil for her will, but at the right time, legal representation.

E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., front row right, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, May 23, 2014. Photography by Roy Alvarez.

Beth Alvarez: Does anybody in the audience have questions?

Christine Hait: I was just going to ask Mary about the child's perspective to just maybe say a little bit more about that—your understanding of her from that perspective of an eight year old. Did your perspective on her change over time?

Mary Winslow Poole: You're asking me to remember way back! Obviously, I felt she was glamorous.

Christine Hait: You knew she was a writer?

Mary Winslow Poole: Oh, yes. Definitely. And at that time I suppose I harbored some desire to follow in her footsteps, so I was enamored of her. And I don't know what else I could say really. Sorry, I can't tell you much more than that really.

Christine Hait: I appreciate that. I think it's so fascinating that you met her at such a young age and knew her so intimately at a young age.

Mary Winslow Poole: Yes, it was great. It was wonderful.

Jane Krause DeMouy: Did she play games with you?

Mary Winslow Poole: I don't remember that she did play games with us.

Beth Alvarez: Ted and I both recently read *Brushes with the Literary*, and I'm trying to remember. I know there's a lot of really charming anecdotes about things that she said about the two of you and the little things that you gave her. The book says you called her Ms. Pota.

Mary Winslow Poole: We called her Ms. Pota in the southern manner. I think she loved being in a place where there were children, and we would kind of act up for her because she was appreciative. And she had a wonderful sense of humor. I wish I had a better memory.

Beth Alvarez: Well, your mother's book, her letters, really do capture part of that.

Mary Winslow Poole: Yes, I think so.

In Memoriam: William Jay Smith

By Darlene Unrue, University of Nevada Las Vegas

The distinguished poet William Jay Smith died August 18, 2015, at the age of 97. He was survived by his second wife, Sonja Haussmann Smith, a son, Gregory, from his first marriage, to the poet Barbara Howes, a stepson, Marc Hoechstetter, two step-grandchildren, and two step-great-grandchildren. A second son from his first marriage, David Emerson Smith, died in 2008.

William Jay Smith was born in Winnfield, Louisiana, April 22, 1918, the older of two children of Jay Smith, a Corporal in the United States Army, and Georgia Ella Campster Smith. He grew up at Jefferson Barracks, a U.S. Army post near St. Louis, Missouri, where his father was an enlisted clarinetist in the Sixth Infantry Band (as well as an occasional moonshiner) and where he learned that his mother was part Choctaw, a fact leading to his lifelong interest in ancestry and cultural heritage. He described his difficult, between-the-wars childhood and adolescence in his 1980 memoir, *Army Brat*, which reviewers praised for its charm, detail, and balanced account of an important subculture in American life.

Smith earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in French Literature from Washington University in St. Louis and became friends there with Thomas Lanier Williams (celebrated in *My Friend Tom: The Poet-Playwright Tennessee Williams*). During World War II he served with the U.S. Navy and afterward continued graduate work at Columbia University, Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and the University of Florence. He was a member of the Vermont House of Representatives (1960-1962), Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress (1968-1970), and Poet-in-Residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (1985-1988). He taught English or French at Washington University, Columbia University, and Williams

William Jay Smith and Eudora Welty, May 1968, when both were in College Park, MD, for the festivities surrounding the opening of the Katherine Anne Porter Room in McKeldin Library. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

College and was professor of English at Hollins University 1970-1980. He frequently lectured at writers' conferences, and in 1981 he was a Fulbright lecturer at Moscow State University. He was the single author of twenty-two volumes of poetry for adults, eighteen volumes of poetry for children, nine volumes of translations in a variety of genres and languages, two volumes of criticism, and two memoirs. He was an editor or compiler, sometimes with other poets, of more than a dozen volumes of poetry. His individual poems routinely appeared in such publications as *Harper's Magazine* and *The New York Review of Books*.

Although Smith occasionally wrote open-form verse, it was his carefully crafted and formal poems that depended on rhyme, rhythm, and meter that garnered the most significant praise. Reviewing his comprehensive 1998 collection *The World below the Window: Poems 1937-1997*, Elizabeth Frank wrote in *The Atlantic*, "With an artisan's care and conscience, Smith makes full use of all the aural and figurative resources of our language. His tetrameters, pentameters, and hexameters are as intricately crafted as Oriental rugs." Smith himself once wrote, "I am a lyric poet, alert, I hope, as my friend Stanley Kunitz has pointed out, 'to the changing weathers of a landscape, the motions of the mind, the complications and surprises of the human comedy.' I believe that poetry should communicate: it is, by its very nature, complex, but its complexity should not prevent its making an immediate impact on the reader. Great poetry must have its own distinctive music; it must resound with the music of the human psyche."

Katherine Anne Porter and William Jay Smith: A Literary Friendship in Letters
A Celebration of Katherine Anne Porter

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

On Monday, November 5, 2012, Katherine Anne Porter was inducted into the American Poets

Porter and William Jay Smith seated on her 18th century canapé, 3112 Q Street, Georgetown, Washington, D.C., late November 1960. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

Corner at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. From 1985 to 1988, William Jay Smith served as the cathedral's Poet-in-Residence. Among the presentations at the 2012 event was the following. Excerpts from Smith's letters are published with the permission of Gregory Jay Smith, his literary executor.

The correspondence exchanged between Katherine Anne Porter and William Jay Smith surviving in Porter's papers at the University of Maryland Libraries dates from 1956 to 1978 and consists of five Porter letters and twenty-eight letters, cards, and telegrams from Smith to Porter. Their letters document an affectionate friendship grounded in their mutual admiration and support for each other's creative work. Although the two met at the 4th Annual Writers Conference at the University of Connecticut in summer 1953, the first of Porter's surviving letters is dated February 20, 1956, and is addressed to Smith and his then-wife Barbara, who were living with their two sons in Italy.

> Your card with David's turtle was and is still delightful, and here is an odd little thing about it I meant to tell you a good while ago. Just a few days before

the card came, I happened to read somewhere. . . a fascinating little note to this effect: that when the turtle goes looking for love, it walks on tip-toe. This is the kind of useful knowledge that seems to stick in my mind, and right afterward comes David's drawing as if in perfect illustration. But of course David knows best what his turtle is up to, and so no doubt he is being chased, or spell it as you please, instead of wearing out his toes romancing about. . .

Have you found it easy living in another country with two babies? At present I happen to know five babies all under the age of three. . . in three families near by who are brought now and then to visit me: Robert Penn and Eleanor Warren's two, my niece's two, and a blond angel down the road. . . . And I can never stop marvelling at their early intelligence and quickness: what does life do to us, I wonder? or is it upbringing? education? Something is dreadfully wrong; I have lived long enough to see wave upon wave of almost perfectly endowed children, and I have known a good number of brilliant gifted young men and women, but I have not seen one who lived up fully to the promise of his first three years. . . . These babies are running rings around their parents—all exceptional parents, too—and only the other day Eleanor asked: "Do you suppose we were bright as that at that age?" And I told her I had heard my grandmother say the same thing about me when I was about three, and I believe the answer can be honestly, without vanity, "Yes, but all of us seem to get a little nipped somewhere along the way."

The first of Smith's letters in the file is dated December 18, 1957, and reports that he and his family have returned to their house in Vermont after three years abroad. He also notes that he had been on a tour of the Midwest promoting his published work and had seen their mutual friend Allen Tate in Minneapolis. His next letter, of December 20, 1958, recounts an unsuccessful attempt to reach Porter in Connecticut, after she had moved to Virginia and congratulates her on the news from Seymour Lawrence that her novel *Ship of Fools* was completed. He also reports that, at the Suffield Writers Conference he had attended the previous summer, "some of the people who had been at the U. of Conn. years ago turned up, some of them with exactly the same verses and stories."

By November 1, 1964, the date of the next of Smith's letters in the file, both he and Porter were living in Washington, D.C. Smith writes, "I am spending this year in Washington on a Ford Foundation grant with Arena Stage. I hope to write a play for them, but as soon as I arrived, they asked me to act in their first production—Brecht's 'Galileo'—and I foolishly accepted. It has taken every minute of my time day and night, but now that the play has opened. . . I hope again to lead a normal life." He concludes the letter with an invitation to meet for lunch or a drink. Clearly the friendship was renewed and strengthened during this period of Smith's residence in Washington, as his December 22, 1964, letter describes his plans for the holidays and concludes "I'll be thinking of you at Christmas & looking forward to seeing you when I return." Evidence of both their renewed friendship and his admiration for Porter and her work is the poetic tribute he wrote and presented to Porter on her birthday: "A Rose for Katherine Anne Porter On her Seventy-fifth Birthday, 15 May 1965," a handwritten copy of which survives in the file of correspondence.

Smith's March 19, 1966, telegram congratulating Porter on receiving the National Book Award for her *Collected Stories* was sent from Roanoke, Virginia, as he was serving as writer-in-residence at Hollins College at that time. By the date of his next letter, Smith was in Williamstown, Massachusetts, as poet-in-residence at Williams College and married to Sonja Haussman, whom Porter had met at the Twelfth Night party she hosted in January 1966. Smith's March 31, 1967, letter reminds Porter that she had promised to send him her translation of the Clement Marot poem she titled "I Am No More What I Once Was" for the

anthology, *Poems from France*, he was preparing for publication. Smith's letter ends with a handwritten postscript: "I've heard that I lost the National Book Award by one vote—that of my old friend—Howard Nemerov!" Porter's handwritten reply of April 3, 1967, opens with the poem translation and humorously responds to his postscript.

> National Book Award—never trust a man whose name ends in ov. Nabokov and I got exactly the same number of votes the first round for the Gold Medal [of the American Academy of Arts and Letters]. They ran off the tie in a second vote. I won. I am told by seven votes—a real Kennedy landslide what?

Replying to Porter's note more than six months later on October 18, 1967, Smith shares the news that he has been appointed the next Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress for a term of two years, recognizes Porter for her role in the appointment, and expresses enthusiasm that he and his wife will have the opportunity to see Porter more often. He also belatedly thanks her for the translation:

> I should have written long ago to thank you for sending me the wonderful translation of the poem of Clement Marot. I was overjoyed to have it—it is a great addition to the book, one of the most outstanding translations, really a brilliant poem in English. Everyone I've showed it to thinks it is great. . . .

Smith expressed gratitude for the inscribed copy of her *A Christmas Story* in his January 15, 1968, letter:

> It was wonderful to have "A Christmas Story"—so simply, so beautifully, so movingly told—a little gem. Thank you very much . . . We did appreciate the book with its lovely inscription.

Unable to attend the formal opening of the Katherine Anne Porter Room in McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland on May 15, 1968, Smith wired the following poetic tribute:

> On the Opening of the Katherine Anne Porter Room at the University of Maryland
> Now may the books and papers in this room,
> Which bear your mark and with which now you part,
> Bring those who read them in the years to come
> Your lasting knowledge of the human heart.

The next seven pieces of surviving correspondence include five letters, a telegram, and a postcard sent by Smith to Porter between June 15, 1969, and Christmas 1973. They document a very busy and productive period of his life. The correspondence conveys affectionate birthday and holiday greetings and reports on his personal travels in the U.S. and abroad, on trips made on behalf of the U.S. State Department to the Far East, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, as well as on his teaching at Hollins College and elsewhere.

Porter's side of the correspondence resumes on January 9, 1976. In her letter of this date, she invites Smith and his wife to write, telephone, or drop in to see her and reports she is not well and struggling to complete a book. The letter concludes affectionately:

> So, bless you both and please remember my love and best wishes to you at all times of the year, not just our pleasant winter festival of wishing each other luck in what has always been I imagine a rather difficult period for human beings. Do let me hear from you or see you and I am glad to know even for a moment where you are.

No response to that letter from Smith has survived among Porter's papers, and Porter's next letter of June 22, 1976, acknowledges the birthday telegram sent by Smith and his wife on May 17 and goes on to lament her decline.

> . . . I am staying in more than ever now and though I hardly dare say it since the friendly rejoinder always is "you'll live to be 100," I am not better and I won't pretend about it from now on. I have a reservoir of energy, will, something, and am going on trying to work, but not as I once did; as if I had 1000 years to live. It does seem to me that it has been about 1000 years and they are giving out. So I have one book in hand and two half-finished I hope to end and that is all. It remains that I miss my friends, living as I do in mid-air, but I do feel there must be some way, some time that we can see each other now and then. Please, when you are in Washington, let me know and maybe you could drop out for an afternoon to visit me. I would dearly love to see you.

In his October 12, 1976, response, Smith expresses his regret that he was not able to reply earlier to the June 22 letter. He explains that his teaching and administration duties at Hollins College have prevented him from accomplishing much of his own work in addition to neglecting personal correspondence. He also reports that he and his wife have taken an apartment in New York and that he is sending her a copy of his recently published *Venice in the Fog*. In addition to news on his teaching and publications, both this letter and his 1976 Christmas message express the hope that he will be able to visit with her when he passes through Washington between Hollins and New York City.

I am going to read virtually all of the text of the last of Porter's letters in the file, dated February 8, 1977, as it summarizes, far better than I can, both her condition at the time and her love and respect for Smith.

> Dear Bill:
>
> . . . I have been drifting for several years toward apathy and inanition, step by step. I haven't given any parties, haven't written a word worth reading and I haven't drawn a happy breath because of the continual ill health. I came to the hospital on the 20th of December and I'm still here until the first of March for more tests and a little more caretaking. I was honestly in a rather bad way, so I was told.
> Your epithalamium is the most lovely I have ever read. I have a taste for this particular form of praise and celebration of a wonderful day of life and I have collected several, especially from the 16th and 17th centuries, and yours, dear Bill, if I am any judge . . . is the most tender and lovely I know. You are a marvelous poet and you have the same kind of tenderness and gentleness of love that is so meant for children and as we go on in life we rather forget that is also meant for lovers. You were a dear to think of me and to send it to me in what has not been a joyful time.
>
> I have finished my memoir on the Sacco and Vanzetti business. . . . I'm now working on Cotton Mather. I have eleven of what I think will turn out to be sixteen chapters ready to go. After that—my medieval murder mystery in which Joan of Arc is spiritually present and saves two criminals from untidy ends, one—being flayed alive and two—being burned at the stake. As I look back I see my themes have not been particularly merry, but then, I have not found this life or world particularly merry. Funny sometimes, amusing now and then, grotesque, brutal, beastly, ugly as the devil and sometimes so brilliant and joyous I have hardly been able to take it after all the evil I have witnessed and suffered from. But now, I am very hopeful, thinking of the two books I shall finish.
>
> My permanent address is the same as always. Do let me hear from you and come and see me when you can. Until then,
>
> My love to you both,
> Katherine Anne

Less than two weeks after Porter composed this letter to Smith, she suffered a series of strokes rendering her unable to complete the planned work and to function independently. The remaining Smith correspondence in the file, two telegrams and four letters, consists mostly of get well wishes and birthday greetings. Apparently he and his wife visited with Porter at least once in 1977 before the June-July publication of her Sacco and Vanzetti piece, as he mentioned the visit and praised the work in an undated note sent after the work appeared:

> I was so happy to read the Sacco & Vanzetti in the *Atlantic*—it is so well done the whole thing—a moving memoir & a most valuable & sensitive documentation of that tragic time.

I will conclude by reading from the last of Smith's surviving letters to Porter dated May 13, 1978, a fitting conclusion to this exploration of their literary friendship.

> Dear Katherine Anne,
>
> Sonja and I will be thinking of you on your birthday Monday. I wish that we could be there with you and lift a glass of wine in your honor. It was good to see you and to talk of old times. I was very touched by your letter and the gift of the poem I wrote for you. I shall treasure it, knowing that it had your approval. I remember so well the day I brought it and read it at your birthday dinner. I think often of our first meeting—at the Writers' Conference in Connecticut—when you introduced me, and encouraged me so much with my work, and of all our happy meetings since then. I wish that there was something that we could do to make you feel better now—we'll hope to see you very soon again.
>
> With much love,
> Yours ever,
> Bill

Porter News from the University of Maryland Libraries

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

Responsibility for the University of Maryland Libraries' Porter holdings is now in the capable hands of Amber Kohl, Acting Head, Literature and Rare Books, who assumed these duties after the July 2015 retirement of Lauren Brown. Researchers can send research queries to the Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives by completing the form at http://www.lib.umd.edu/special/contact/home. Porter inquiries can also be directed to Amber Kohl at amberk@umd.edu, (301) 405-9214. Her mailing address is 1202A Hornbake Library, 4130 Campus Drive, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Porter researchers must register for a user account in order to consult materials from the Libraries' Porter holdings in the Maryland Room in Hornbake Library as well as to order duplications of these materials. Once registered, researchers can request materials online even when the reading room is closed, schedule requests so that materials will be on hold in the reading room when they arrive, submit duplication orders and receive digital scanning orders online, view and track the status of requests and orders, review request history, and export citations for references. Registering for an account is accomplished by means of the "Special Collections Account" button located on the main page for Special Collections and University Archives (http://www.lib.umd.edu/special) and on other SCUA Web pages.

Since last reported in the newsletter Porter-related acquisitions include two items that have been incorporated into her papers: Porter's 1955 Christmas greeting to John Melville and the Spring 1936 issue of *Signatures* in which two large sections from "Noon Wine" were first published. The Libraries' purchased the Winslow-Comes Papers, consisting of

correspondence from Porter to Marcella Winslow, her mother Honora Comès, and Winslow's daughter, Mary, dating between 1944 and 1965. Steven Haas donated the Papers of Rhea Johnson to the Libraries in 2014. The collection includes correspondence from Porter dating between 1959 and 1974, copies of books from Porter's personal library as well as books inscribed to Johnson. Both Winslow and Johnson became acquainted with Porter when she resided in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Porter lived with Winslow and her children in Winslow's 3106 P Street, NW, home from April to September 1944. On September 1, 1959, she moved into the top two floors of a house she leased at 3112 Q Street, NW, in Georgetown. At the time Rhea Johnson, a U.S. State Department employee, was already living in the basement of the house, and the two remained residents there until Porter left the Q Street house for an extended one-year residence in Europe at the end of October 1962.

Non-commercial recordings of Porter from her papers and those of her nephew Paul have been digitized and are accessible on the Libraries' Web site. There are thirty-nine audio files which represent twenty-eight separate recordings dating from 1953 to 2003. They include interviews with and readings by Porter as well as the Porter program held at Hornbake Library in April 2003. The largest number consists of recordings Paul Porter made of telephone conversations with his aunt between 1972 and 1976. Because of intellectual property issues, five of the recordings are not available to individuals attempting to access them on-line remotely. These include Katherine Anne Porter interviewed by Barbara Coleman on "Here's Barbara," a television program on WMAL in Washington, D.C., on March 7, 1968; Porter reading love poems during her fifth appearance on the CBS's New York City program Camera Three on May 24, 1961; her public address on short stories at Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA, May 4, 1972; a classroom conversation about short stories at Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA, on May 5, 1972; and her reading of "Noon Wine" on November 12, 1953, at the Poetry Center, 92nd Street YM-YWHA, New York, NY. These recordings can be accessed by researchers on site in the Maryland Room of Hornbake Library. Researchers can access the remaining twenty-three recordings at http://digital.lib.umd.edu/ on the Libraries' Web site by searching "Porter, Katherine Anne" and "Creators" with an "Advanced Search."

Porter's nephew Paul, in uniform holding a pipe, Camp Roberts, CA, circa 1944. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

I have staffed the Katherine Anne Porter Room on Wednesday afternoons during the academic year. In addition to the visitors during the regular hours of operation, undergraduate and graduate classes from both the University of Maryland and Catholic University of America have made visits. Tours of the Porter Room were also offered during each of the University of Maryland's Maryland Day festivities in 2015 and 2016. These late-April all-campus open house activities attract as many as 100,000 visitors to the campus and provide a wonderful opportunity to introduce Porter to a wide variety of individuals.

Anyone who has questions concerning the Porter Room or the Libraries' Porter holdings should not hesitate to contact Amber Kohl, whose contact information is in the first paragraph of

this article, or myself, Curator of Literary Manuscripts Emerita, Special Collections and University Archives, Hornbake Library, 4130 Campus Drive, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, alvarez@umd.edu. Information about Katherine Anne Porter resources on the Libraries' Web site can be located at http://digital.lib.umd.edi/archivesum/rguide.kap.jsp and http://lib.guides.umd.edu/KatherineAnnePorter.

Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust

By Daniel C. Mack, Associate Dean for Collections, University of Maryland Libraries

The University of Maryland Libraries have continued and expanded their efforts to promote the works of Katherine Anne Porter to the general public, to fans and scholars of Porter's works, and to the international community of scholars. The Libraries' new interim Dean, Babak Hamidzadeh, now serves as Trustee for the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust. Daniel Mack, Associate Dean for Collection Strategies and Services, continues to serve the Dean, the Trust, and the Libraries' Porter collections by coordinating activities relating to Porter and her legacy.

During the past year, Mack has collaborated with Open Roads Integrated Media to bring Porter's works into the digital age. Open Roads publishes works of over 2,000 authors ranging from Aesop to Louisa May Alcott, and from Isaac Asimov to Gertrude Stein. As a tech-savvy publisher, Open Roads specializes in well-produced, affordable digital editions of major works and authors. The University of Maryland Libraries, representing the Trust, signed an agreement with Open Roads to publish a digital edition of Porter's novel *Ship of Fools*. The Libraries negotiated very favorable terms for a share of the royalties from this digital edition.

The work includes an illustrated biography of Porter, and features rare photographs from the University of Maryland Libraries. Beth Alvarez, Ph.D., Curator Emerita of Literary Manuscripts, and Lauren Brown, then Co-Manager, now Librarian Emeritus of Special Collections and University Archives, shared their expertise in the selection of photographs.

Porter on board the ship on which she travelled from Mexico to Germany, August-September 1931, one of the illustrations in the Open Roads digital edition of *Ships of Fools*. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

The *Ship of Fools* digital edition is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IndieBound, and Overdrive. Readers can enjoy the edition on a variety of tablets and other mobile devices. The e-book has sold well during the past several months. Royalties are added directly to the principal of the Trust, and have totaled over $2,000 thus far. The University of Maryland Libraries view this digital edition as another project to bring more of Porter's legacy into the digital age, and we are pleased with the success of this project. Other publishers have already approached the Libraries to discuss other possible digital editions. The Libraries as Trustee consult closely with Fred Courtright of

the Permissions Company as well as with the University of Maryland's Office of General Counsel on issues regarding permissions for new editions of Porter's literary works.

The Libraries administration are proud of our association with the literary legacy of Porter, and are happy to be able to support new endeavors to bring her works to new audiences. The digital edition of *Ship of Fools* not only accomplishes this, but also brings in revenue to grow the Trust's funds. This in turn increases our ability to support other Porter-related initiatives such as the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project. In addition to collaborating with University of Maryland partners such as the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), we now have a model for creating successful partnerships with publishers and other parties external to the University. We look forward to identifying other mutually beneficial partnerships to promote Porter and her works. As Trustee, the Libraries have made it a priority to continue to explore new collaborations and create innovative projects that both preserve and interpret Porter's work for current and future readers. The Trust is always happy to hear new ideas from Porter fans and scholars! Please send your suggestions to Daniel Mack, Associate Dean, University of Maryland Libraries, at dmack@umd.edu.

Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center News

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

The Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center at 508 Center Street in Kyle, Texas, serves as a venue for readings and talks by visiting writers, a museum, and a home for writers-in-residence. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Kim Barnes, Amy Hempl, Adam Johnson, Heather Christle, Kim Addonizio, Brian Turner, Philip Lopate, and Carolyn Forche gave readings at the center. In 2015-2016, the readers included Daniel Orozco, Tracy K. Smith, Terrance Hayes, Mary Szybist, Leslie Jamison, Stuart Dybek, Laurie Ann Guerrero, and Rob Spillman. The reading series is sponsored by Texas State University's Department of English, the Lindsey Literary Series, the Burdine Johnson Foundation, and the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center.

Texas State's M.F.A. program publishes an on-line literary journal, *Front Porch* (http://www.frontporchjournal.com/), which includes fiction, poetry, reviews, and nonfiction by emerging and established authors. Video of readings and Q&A sessions by distinguished writers who visit the KAP Literary Center are available and regularly updated on the *Front Porch* Web site.

The Writers-in-Residence at the KAP House since 2008 include Michael Noll, Katie Angermeier, and Jeremy Garrett. Funded by the Burdine Johnson Foundation, the Writer-in-Residence lives in the house and acts as curator of the museum, and the coordinator of the visiting writers series. The Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center is open to visitors and school groups by appointment. To arrange a visit, e-mail kapliterarycenter@gmail.com or call (512) 268-6637.

Updated Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center information appears at http://www.kapliterarycenter.com/. Inquiries concerning Texas State's M.F.A. in Creative Writing can be made through the program's Web site (http://www.english.txstate.edu/mfa/), via email at mfinearts@txstate.edu, or by phone at (512) 245-7681.

Updates from the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project

By Caitlin Rizzo, University of Maryland

In the October 2014 issue of this newsletter, the University of Maryland Libraries announced the development of the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project. The project represents a collaboration between the University of

Maryland Special Collections and Digital Systems and Stewardship divisions. It will bring together thousands of letters from the University of Maryland Special Collections' Katherine Anne Porter holdings into a new digital environment that will offer unprecedented access to these collections. Although in 2014, we anticipated that the KAP Correspondence project would be available to the public online in 2015, expansions in the scope of the project caused some delay in implementation. In fall 2015, the Libraries embarked on a second phase of the project. However, we are now happy to announce the completion of the second phase of the project as well as a revised launch date of summer 2016.

Porter in the Luxembourg Gardens, Paris, April 1932. Part of Porter's inscription noted, "just before I went to the hospital." Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

During the second phase, 1,500 more Porter letters, greeting cards, postcards, and telegrams are being digitized. These letters comprise approximately 3,000 pages of correspondence sent to over forty correspondents, including confidants and personal acquaintances Glenway and Barbara Harrison Wescott, Monroe Wheeler, George Platt Lynes, Donald Elder, Mary Louis Doherty, and Isabel Bayley. This addition spans the years 1924 to 1977, across nine different countries and an ocean.

This new batch of letters draws heavily from Porter's correspondence with her other writers and authors. In this round, we are digitizing Porter's correspondence to Cleanth and Tinkum Brooks, Eleanor Clark, Malcolm Cowley, Ford Maddox Ford, Caroline Gordon, William Goyen, William Humphrey, Flannery O'Connor, Ezra Pound, Theodore Roethke, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, and Tennessee Williams, among others. These letters offer Porter's insights into the work of her literary contemporaries and reveal the extent of her involvement and influence within a community of Modern writers.

We are currently working to create a Web site that will ensure the enduring research value of the project. As part of this goal, we have created extensive metadata that categorizes each of these letters by recipient, date, location, and collection holdings. This metadata will also allow users of the digital environment to create visualizations and search the correspondence according to these data points.

We are also taking advantage of innovations in image display in order to provide users with high quality images of the correspondence. In the current iteration of our Web site, we are implementing International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) standards for our images. The IIIF standards have been implemented across a growing number of repositories (including the British Library, Harvard University, and the National Gallery of Art) committed to providing unprecedented levels of access to image-based resources across cultural institutions.

These standards will complement a host of features on the Web site which will allow researchers and general members of the public to not only search the letters, but visualize the correspondence in new ways. Web site users will be able to compare images of the correspondence side by side as well as zoom to view close ups of the images of correspondence clearly. Also, new innovations in the search module will allow users to generate visual results according to the parameters of their search. For example, these features will include

maps for location searches and timelines for date searches. We anticipate that these new possibilities will offer new potential both for the classroom and for the public.

We anticipate that the digital environment will debut in summer 2016 and look forward to the completion of a mobile Web site to follow. For more information on the project, please visit the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project Web site at: http://digital.lib.umd.edu/kap. We regularly share images and updates about the collection on the University of Maryland Special Collections blog and twitter account. You can find us at https://hornbakelibrary.wordpress.com/ or follow us on Twitter at @HornbakeLibrary. We are also happy to answer questions about the project via e-mail. Questions can be directed to carizzo@umd.edu.

Caitlin Rizzo is a graduate assistant working on the KAP Correspondence Project. She completed her M.A. in English at the University of Maryland in spring 2016 and will begin work on her M.L.S. in fall 2016.

Katherine Anne Porter's Never-Ending Support for Ezra Pound

By Ted Wojtasik, St. Andrews University

Ted Wojtasik presented this paper at the 26th Ezra Pound International Conference in Brunnenburg, Italy, on July 11, 2015.

Katherine Anne Porter's final book published in her lifetime was *The Never-Ending Wrong* in 1977. This slender book, just 63 pages long, is a memoir about her time protesting the Sacco and Vanzetti death sentences in Boston, days before the two Italian men were executed in 1927.[1] The title of my paper, obviously, is an allusion to this book, but it also suggests the never-ending wrong of Ezra Pound's incarceration in St. Elizabeths Hospital.

Ezra Pound's life and work permeate Katherine Anne Porter's life and work. First and foremost, he was a singularly important literary figure to her as an aspiring artist. In her essay-review of *The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, titled "It is Hard to Stand in the Middle," she claims that five writers educated her and others of her generation:

> In Mexico, many years ago, Hart Crane and I were reading again *Pavannes and Divisions*, and at some dogmatic statement in the text Crane suddenly burst out: "I'm tired of Ezra Pound!" And I asked him, "Well, who else is there?" He thought a few seconds and said, "It's true there's nobody like him, nobody to take his place." This was the truth for us then, and it is still the truth for many of us who came up, were educated, you might say, in contemporary literature, not at schools at all but by five writers: Henry James, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound. The beginning artist is educated by whoever helps him to learn how to work his own vein, who helps him to fix his standards, and who gives him courage. I believe I can speak for a whole generation of writers who acknowledge that these five men were in just this way, the great educators of their time. (Porter, "'It is Hard'" 40)

Pound's selected letters was published in 1950, Porter's essay-review appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* in October 1950, and Pound was spending his fifth year in St. Elizabeths Hospital—the title of Porter's essay-review is a line from Pound's Canto XIII with Kung speaking: "Anyone can run to excesses, / It is easy to shoot past the mark, / It is hard to stand firm in the middle" (59/56-58).[2] Also, this essay-review appeared almost two years after the uproar of the 1949 Bollingen-Library of Congress Award, one of the most controversial events in American literary history, which also involved Katherine Anne Porter.

In 1944 Archibald MacLeish asked Porter to become a Fellow of Regional American Literature at the Library of Congress to fill out the unexpired term of John Peale Bishop, who

had resigned due to illness (Porter, "A Letter to the Editor" 209). This group then became known as the Fellows in American Letters of the Library of Congress.

In March 1948 a press release announced the first Bollingen-Library of Congress Award for Poetry that carried a purse of $1,000.[3] The prize would be awarded in February, on an annual basis, for the best book of verse by an American poet published the preceding calendar year. The jury of selection for the first award were the Fellows in American Letters of the Library of Congress: Leonie Adams, Conrad Aiken, W.H. Auden, Louise Bogan, Katherine Garrison Chapin, T.S. Eliot, Paul Green, Robert Lowell, Katherine Anne Porter, Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate, Willard Thorp, and Robert Penn Warren. Porter and ten other members voted 1st place for Pound; thus, Pound won the first Bollingen-Library of Congress Award in 1949 for *The Pisan Cantos*.

Charles Collingwood broke the news on the radio broadcast *CBS Radio News*, on February 19, 1949, a Saturday night (McGuire "Ezra Pound and Bollingen Prize Controversy"). The following Sunday morning the *New York Times* ran a front-page article with the headline: "Pound, in Mental Clinic, Wins Prize for Poetry Penned in Treason Cell." In the *New York Herald Tribune*, Louis Untermeyer called *The Pisan Cantos*, "a ragbag and tail end of Pound at his worst. It shows a very disordered mind, one affected by the seeds of Fascism."

A few months later, Robert Hillyer published two articles in *The Saturday Review of Literature*: one on June 11th titled "Treason's Strange Fruit: The Case of Ezra Pound and the Bollingen Award" and the other article on June 18th titled "Poetry's New Priesthood." Here's a sample of the first article's content and tone: "His poems are the vehicle of contempt for America, Fascism, anti-Semitism, and, in the prize-winning 'Pisan Cantos' themselves, ruthless mockery of our Christian war dead. That fact may place the award, and the committee on the Bollingen Prize, in an observable relationship to our dead and to the nation they died for" (9).

After Porter read these two articles, she wrote a letter to *The Saturday Review of Literature* to defend herself and her decision to award the Bollingen Prize to *The Pisan Cantos*.

> I am glad he is being cared for [some in Congress had protested his being "comfortably" cared for at St. Elizabeths], I pity his madness * [the asterisk links to a footnote in which KAP says she doubted then and now (1969) that E.P. was ever mad]; the evil he has done is hateful to me, I reject it without reservation; but I remember the light that used to shine from his pages when he wrote about something he knew with his heart—poetry—and the beautiful translations, or paraphrases, from the Chinese and the Provençal, and how well he knew that art was not a marginal thing, but lived at the center of being by its own reality; that it was no decoration, but the Stone itself; no matter, he cannot commit treason against that, it is beyond the reach of his mortal part. ("'It is Hard'" 212)

Having been schooled in the New Critical method of literary analysis, Porter could separate, entirely and completely, the man of poetry from the man of politics. That is how the New Critics were trained: to concentrate solely and utterly upon the text with no consideration for history, culture, ideology, authorship, readership … nothing but the text. In Sunday morning's *Washington Post*, Lee Grove reports: "In nominating Pound for the award, the jury was aware that 'objections may be made to awarding a prize to a man situated as is Pound,' but that 'to permit other considerations than that of poetic achievement to sway the decision would destroy the significance of the award and would in principle deny the validity of that objective perception of value on which any civilized society must rest.'"

That ability, back then, to compartmentalize anything other than "poetic achievement" is a rather curious notion for the critical culture today, having been exposed to feminism, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction,

and other critical theories. However, in her time and in her place, Porter did not retreat from controversy and defended her decision to award the Bollingen Prize to Pound's *Pisan Cantos* in 1949.[4]

Her next public protest of support for Pound happened in 1972. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, beginning in 1958, began awarding an annual Emerson-Thoreau Medal to an artist in honor of his or her total literary achievement rather than for one specific work. In 1962 Katherine Anne Porter was honored with this medal.

In 1972 Pound was nominated for the Emerson-Thoreau Medal in honor of *his* literary achievement. The chair of the nominating committee was Leon Edel with committee members John Cheever, Lillian Hellman, James Laughlin, Louis Martz, and Harry Levin but member Lewis Mumford disagreed with Pound's nomination and the Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell contested it; hence, the executive committee overturned the nomination (Tytell 338). In protest of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences *not* giving the same award to Pound in 1972, Porter returned her 1962 Emerson-Thoreau Medal to the Academy (Unrue 1038). That was her final public support for Pound, which didn't receive much publicity, as far as I could discover.

However, privately, behind the scenes, Porter was also supporting and fighting for Pound. In 1956 she wrote a long letter to the editors of *The Pound Newsletter*. Porter was an inveterate letter writer, and I have included the entire letter to end this critical essay because it demonstrates her intelligence and insight, her sense of humor and wit, her passion and compassion, and her beautiful style of writing a letter that free-associates from image to image.

Roxbury Road, Southbury, Connecticut.
21 January, 1956
The Editors
The Pound Newsletter
2125 Dwinelle Hall, University of California
Berkeley 4 California.

Dear Editors: The copy of the Pound Newsletter: 8, which you so kindly mailed to me in October, reached me safely after the following journey: It left Berkeley October 19, 1955; arrived at Liége, Belgium, 16 November; Brussels, 17 November; from Brussels to Roxbury Road, Connecticut, arrived 5 December: by my count, forty-seven days by land and sea, and doubling on its tracks somewhat to boot, but it got here! And I have enjoyed it very much, and meant to write at once and tell you so; but after many wanderings for the past too many years, I have fallen deeply in arrears with all kinds of human things such as keeping up with one's letters—but I expect to live here for the next few years and shall no doubt catch up with everything.

I would say I am sorry I was not invited to contribute a word,—it would needs have been a small one, perhaps, but founded on more than thirty-five years of faith in, and admiration of the man—to the 70th birthday number: I think for a writer it is very hard to name one's influences, and I was very independent and bent on going to hell or getting to heaven as the case might be, in my own way; but I do know that from the day I discovered the writings of Ezra Pound, I read him attentively, not so much for instruction, though I most surely got that, too; but for the *tone*, as Allen Tate said of his poetry; his living sense of the reality of art, his dedication to mastership in his practise of it. I recognized it at once, and knew I needed it, and I know now how many others of my time felt the same way; and it is very pleasant now to see how right our instincts were …. [ellipsis and period in original]

I enjoyed specially Professor Peachy's "The Greek Elements" etc. Mr. Chute's memoirs, for his account of E.P.'s concerts of old music: I had much earlier discovered old music for myself from other sources, but knowing how he understands music throws added light on his rhythms and melodic line in his poetry. Mrs. Cann's memoir simply stirs my own sentimental recollections: I, too, lived in that famous pavilion at 70 bis rue Notre Dame des Champs: my husband and I lived there from the first of December 1934 to the 15th of October, 1936: by that time the floors had been renewed, someone had put in central heating; the little square of garden had been laid out in miniature pebbled walks between the atelier and the house, the glassed in entrance was overgrown with Virginia creeper, there was a young chestnut tree near the flight of steps leading to the two tiny cubby holes attached to the atelier; a pink thorntree near the gate; and evergreen shrubs and border-plants all about. We furnished it from the Thieves' Market, old ware-houses, and country auctions, and here on my (presently) snowbound Connecticut hillside, temperature 10 above zero, I am still surrounded by those things we bought then so gayly to put in our charming little pavilion. But here is the odd thing: of all my writing friends and Paris familiars who came to that little garden, or sat before the big fireplace in the atelier, not one mentioned that Ezra Pound had lived there. They remembered the Arthur Trains, and the like: and poor Cheever Dunning who lived in one of the ateliers in this compound, who committed suicide, and left his cat with the Concierge, Madame Davaze. This cat when we knew him was a weary old hero of thirteen years, and when we had to leave, Madame asked me to leave her my young adorable Skipper to take the place of the old fellow who must go soon, no doubt. Truth is, I was too busy living every day as it came and trying to write, to be much interested in literary history, or to lead the literary life; and not until I began, years later, to read the spate of recollections of Pound did I know that he had lived there. The place was dear to me for all my own reasons, and my memories very good; and I take pleasure in knowing that Ezra Pound by living there has immortalized it.

Some years ago I published a review of Pound's Letters in which I was as frank with him as he is with others, for I owed that to myself and to him: he would be the first to detest indiscriminate praise: and he wrote to protest a point or two. I went to see him in Washington, and found him amiable, welcoming, full of good talk, and with his quite indomitable spirit and natural dignity unimpaired by his situation, which is shameful by now indeed, but not to him. Dorothy Shakespeare of course was with him, and it was extraordinary and beautiful the atmosphere they created around them in that place (St. Elizabeth's) of greeting friends and visitors in their own house. I always admired them both at a distance, but I felt then that I could probably never have seen them to better advantage.

When I say, (see above) *shameful by now*, I mean simply that in war time and the upsets of early peace, there was some excuse for the traitor hunt and hasty actions: such things are among the curses of war. But of the four named and proscribed by Mr. Biddle, two little nonentities escaped, I believe, (I am not sure how, but who has heard of them lately? And they are certainly not in prison. I seem to remember that one of them has died, but no matter, really.) The point is, the fourth one, an American woman named Jane Anderson, did for Hitler over the radio in Berlin exactly as much and more than Pound did for Mussolini. Nobody ever called her insane that I know about, but I

heard her several times by short wave, a ranting, screaming woman who sounded as if she suffered from a malignant form of hysteria. She was one of the four condemned in absentia by Mr. Biddle, but she was exonerated by an American court on the grounds that even if she had defended Hitler, at the same time she defended religion and morals.

She was a woman of very bad reputation, having played a shady game of international spy-politics all over Europe and America for years, awfully like an E. Philips Oppenheim *femme fatale*, but finally married a Spanish Marqués and was converted to the Catholic faith, very stridently and at the top of her voice on Hitler's radio.

Now then, why may not Ezra Pound at this late day, after these years of imprisonment, be exonerated too, as simply and fully and finally? Or if the specialists persist in their diagnosis of insanity, why may he not be freed to the care of his wife and children, so devoted as they are and so anxious for this charge? It seems to me that the authorities who handle this case have got in the habit of thinking of it as settled somehow, and mean almost by default to let him stay where he is. What may have been legally and morally the right step to take in those first fevered days after the war, has now become an extended and continuing act of injustice. Times change, feelings change, political situations shift and reverse directions, international alliances change hands like partners in a square dance: this government is rapidly leading in the project of restoring Germany to its former power: we have taken Italy back to our hearts; Franco's Fascist Spain has been accepted officially: why is this one lone human being, this great poet who sheds such glory on our national literature, to be excepted from the general amnesty and love-feast?

There is a point I have thought of a good deal though I have not mentioned it till now, nor do I know if anyone else has, and it is this: right up to the moment when war was declared, it was very respectable here, in this country, to admire and approve of Mussolini and his works. He was largely financed from here, and up to 1939 some of our most harmless family magazines published article after article in his praise. I myself know quite numbers of perfectly good people who lived or travelled in Italy during his time, who came back saying how Italy was improved, how comfortable things were under Mussolini's hand. No matter what his motives, his feelings, Ezra Pound was, in support of Mussolini, (and no matter how mistaken we think him,) going along for years in a popular, if not positively fashionable, current of opinion. When war came and changed everything, it turned out that Ezra Pound was as sincere in that attitude as he is about poetry, for instance: he simply was unable to turn the back handspring demanded of him so suddenly; he lacked on the one hand the moral flexibility, on the other hand the political common sense, not to say patriotism, (for in his time, patriotism had been taking quite a thrashing in some very articulate quarters) to change his coat in the necessary twinkling of an eye. I deplore his wrongheadedness in this, I regret bitterly that he was ever Mussolini's dupe for even a second of time—but just the same I say it is high time to call a halt to this imprisonment. Surely by now he has expiated his lack of political acumen which caused his failure in duty as an American citizen in time of war.

I didn't intend to write this long letter, but these things have been long on my mind, and I feel that you are the very people to write them to.

Yours sincerely,
(Katherine Anne Porter to the Editors of the *Pound Newsletter)*

She wrote this letter to the editors of *The Pound Newsletter* because she believed and hoped that they would have the most authority and credibility to help secure Pound's release from St. Elizabeths Hospital. Here is one more of Porter's attempts to do something about Pound's incarceration that I'm sure he never knew about or, for that matter, not many others.

As she said in this letter: "What may have been legally and morally the right step to take in those first fevered days after the war, has now become an extended and continuing act of injustice." Katherine Anne Porter's never-ending support for Ezra Pound.

End Notes

1. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian-born U.S. anarchists who were convicted of murdering a guard and a paymaster during the armed robbery of the Slater and Morrill Shoe Company, committed April 15, 1920, in South Braintree, Massachusetts, United States, and were executed by electrocution seven years later at Charlestown State Prison. Both adhered to an anarchist movement that advocated relentless warfare against the government. By 1925, the case had drawn worldwide attention. As details of the trial and the men's suspected innocence became known, Sacco and Vanzetti became the center of one of the largest causes célèbres in modern history (Wikipedia contributors).

2. I don't know if the removal of the word "firm" was intentional or not, but my sense is that it was probably unintentional and simply never corrected in later reprints.

3. Today that amount would be approximately $10,000.

4. The Bollingen-Library of Congress Award ended in 1949. Yale University attained the rights to award the Bollingen Prize in Poetry in 1950, and it continues on to this day.

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The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2014

By Christine Grogan, Penn State University

The work of Katherine Anne Porter continues to draw critical attention. This past year saw the publication of seven scholarly articles and two notes on KAP.

To compile this bibliography, which annotates scholarship on Porter published in 2014, I searched the *MLA International Bibliography* and *Academic Search Premier*, using the term "Porter, Katherine Anne." To find dissertations, I searched *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses A&I*, using the term "Porter, Katherine Anne" and limiting the search to "abstract." I did not include material that contained only passing reference of Porter, and my annotations summarize instead of evaluate.

Please send information on any additions that need to be made to this bibliography to Christine Grogan at clg5579@psu.edu so that I may include the information in next year's newsletter.

Beth Alvarez's "'A Desert Cactus': The Literary Friendship of Katherine Anne Porter and Kay Boyle," *E-rea* 10.2 (2013) will be of interest to both Katherine Anne Porter and Kay Boyle scholars. In this article, Alvarez reproduces portions of the letters exchanged between Porter and Boyle during their 45 years of epistolary friendship, a friendship that Porter claimed on one occasion was unfaltering, cactus-strong. The letters are a testament to their "professional and personal respect, admiration, and genuine love for one another." These are mostly complimentary notes in which Boyle called Porter "the greatest woman writer we have had," and Porter said that Boyle's *The Crazy Hunter*, the first book ever dedicated to her, "is as near perfection as any story I know." Alvarez discusses these letters in their three natural chronological groupings—between 1931 and 1942; in 1957; and between 1966 and 1974.

Two scholarly works focused on *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* this year. As we saw in previous years, Porter continues to receive much-deserved credit for being the only American writer to treat the influenza pandemic of 1918 at length. Elizabeth Outka's "'Wood for the Coffins Ran Out': Modernism and the Shadowed Afterlife of the Influenza Pandemic," *Modernism/modernity* 21.4 (2014): 937-60, is a recovery effort to investigate the flu as a central trauma within modernist studies. She reads four works (Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*), starting with Porter, to argue that they bear witness—if at times through veiled references—to the most lethal plague in human history, which claimed five to ten times more lives than the First World War although it is overshadowed by it. In "Adam's Arrows in Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*," *The Explicator* 72.1 (2014): 1-5, Roger Platizky adds his voice to the critical discussion of Adam and argues that his character alludes—"in a modernist revisionary way"—to the martyred Saint Sebastian. Platizky sees a transcendent quality to the ending of the story in which Adam's arrows are "singing," suggesting that Miranda mourns his death through dirge but survives to sing it nonetheless.

Two articles were published this year that read, and encourage other scholars to read, Porter's stories in the context of the magazines where they first appeared in order to enable multiple interpretative possibilities. In "Katherine Anne Porter, Magic, and *transition*," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 61.2 (2015): 209-31, Kerry Hasler-Brooks examines "Magic" in terms of its original publication in Eugene Jolas's literary magazine *transition*. She charts the story's role in the magazine's transformation from a

transnational monthly into "an international quarterly for creative experiment." She credits Porter's story for showcasing the transformative and political potential of patois that Jolas idealized in his theoretical work but was unable to craft in his own creative work. At the end of her article, Hasler-Brooks calls for scholars to do more of the kind of work she does here. Specifically, she invites scholars to reconsider "the metamorphosis of *New Masses*, from an avant-garde publication to one oriented toward the proletariat, in the midst of which was the October 1927 issue where Porter's story 'He' appeared." In "Reading Katherine Anne Porter's 'He' through 'He': Versions and Revisions," *Genre* 47.3 (2014): 309-34, Fiona McWilliam does just that as she explores the original publication of "He" in the 1927 edition of *New Masses*. She then discusses the textual changes and contextual revisions made to "He" from its original publication in the political magazine to the one in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter** by which time Porter had emerged as a politically-disillusioned stylist.

Buried in a footnote in McWilliam's article is mention of Porter's story, "The Fig Tree," which was completed in 1929 but then "subsequently lost," not published until 1960. This lost story is the subject of both Melinda W. McBee's award-winning article titled "'You Wouldn't Know If I Told You': Epiphany and Knowledge in Katherine Anne Porter's 'The Fig Tree,'" *CCTE Studies* 78 (2013): 15-23, and Heather A. Fox's note titled "Resurrecting Truth in Katherine Anne Porter's 'The Fig Tree,'" *The Explicator* 72.3 (2014): 219-23. McBee performs a close reading of the story to show Miranda's progression from confusion to knowledge. She credits Great-Aunt Eliza's scientific observations for helping Miranda reach two important conclusions: 1. Knowledge is "infinite, timeless, and realmless," and 2. There are some questions no one—not even an adult—has answers to. Fox also argues that Miranda matures throughout the course of the story, specifically learning truth about the inevitability of death. Great-Aunt Eliza and the scientific truth she imparts are crucial in the narrative for clarifying to Miranda the truth about her guilt regarding her mother's death.

Fox went on to publish two more pieces of scholarship on Porter this year. In "(Re)Positioning through Remembering and Forgetting: Grandmother and Nannie in Katherine Anne Porter's 'The Source,' 'The Journey,' and 'The Last Leaf,'" *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South* 21.2 (2014): 75-97, Fox reads Porter's three stories, spending the most time on "The Journey," to see what they cumulatively reveal about Grandmother and Nannie. She argues that "they represent a blending of past and present perspectives that depicts the changing roles of southern women during the transition from the Old South to the New South—an identity bound and repositioned through remembering and forgetting." Fox elaborates on the topic of memory in Porter's stories in "Representations of Truth: The Significance of Order in Katherine Anne Porter's The Old Order Stories," *Janus Head* 14.2 (2015): 201-25. In this article, she traces the rearrangement of The Old Order Stories in four collections over 30 years. In rearranging the order—in which no changes were made to the stories' content—Porter, Fox argues, shows "memory's process of reconstruction and how the perspective of time transforms event through addition, elimination, and arrangement." Arguing that the most prominent change between *The Old Order: Stories of the South* and *The Collected Stories* is the addition of "The Fig Tree," Fox concludes that by adding this story, "Porter's original intentions for depicting Miranda's evolving perception of truth are finally complete."

*McWilliam uses the 1979 paperback version instead of the 1965 original of *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter*.

American Academy of Arts and Letters: Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature, 2010, 2012, 2014

By Christine Grogan, Penn State University

Katherine Anne Porter was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1941 and to the Academy of Arts and Letters in 1966. In 2001, the Literary Trust of Katherine Anne Porter established the Katherine Anne Porter biennial award in literature in the amount of $20,000 to honor a fiction writer in mid-career "whose achievements and dedication to the literary profession have been demonstrated."

The first recipient was Lynn Freed in 2002; succeeding awardees were Nicholson Baker in 2004, Arturo Vivante in 2006, John Edgar Wideman in 2008, Tim O'Brien in 2010, Maureen Howard in 2012, and Sherman Alexie in 2014. Previous newsletters included pieces on Freed, Baker, Vivante, and Wideman.

On May 19, 2010, Tim O'Brien received the Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature by the Academy of Arts and Letters at the Academy's annual ceremonial in New York City. The members of the 2010 Awards Committee were Philip Levine, Romulus Linney, Rosanna Warren, and Joy Williams.

Presented to O'Brien by fellow fiction writer and poet Russell Bank, the citation for the award reads: "Tim O'Brien's superb Vietnam novels take us into that dark struggle of death and betrayal, where young American soldiers were thrown away in a useless war of devastating cruelties. His later books use that same sharp eye, mordant humor, and narrative power, to chronicle our later life, with its own battles, its many defeats, and few victories. Both tender and savage, his portrayals of men are unsurpassed."

Born in Austin, Minnesota, in 1946, O'Brien received a B.A. in political science from Macalester College. Upon graduating in 1968, he was drafted into the army during the Vietnam War and served from 1969 to 1970. His division contained a unit involved in the aftermath of the infamous My Lai massacre. O'Brien has said that when his unit got to the area surrounding My Lai (referred to as "Pinkville" by the U.S. forces), "we all wondered why the place was so hostile. We did not know there had been a massacre there a year earlier. The news about that only came out later, while we were there, and then we knew."

O'Brien attained the rank of sergeant. After completing his tour of duty, he attended graduate school at Harvard University and worked as an intern at the *Washington Post*. In 1973, his writing career was launched with the publication of *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*. He's gone on to have a prolific career, authoring works including *Northern Lights* (1975), *The Nuclear Age* (1985), *In the Lake of the Woods* (1994), *Tomcat in Love* (1998), *July, July* (2002), and the two for which he's best known: *The Things They Carried* (1990) and *Going After Cacciato* (1978), the latter winning the National Book Award and judged by many critics to be the best book by an American about the Vietnam War.

In addition to the National Book Award, his prizes include the James Fenimore Cooper Prize for Best Historical Fiction (in 1995 for *In the Lake of the Woods*), the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation's Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award (in August 2012), the $100,000 Pritzker Military Library Literature Award (in June 2013), and the Purple Heart.

O'Brien's signature style combines autobiography and fiction, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. In *You've Got to Read This*, writer Bobbie Ann Mason describes O'Brien's matter-of-fact details in her response to *The Things They Carried*: "Of all the stories I've read in the last decade, Tim O'Brien's 'The Things They Carried' hit me hardest. It knocked me down, just as if a hundred-pound rucksack had been thrown right at me. The weight of the things the American soldiers carried on their interminable journey through the jungle in Vietnam sets the tone for this story. But the

power of it is not just the poundage they were humping on their backs. The story's list of 'things they carried' extends to the burden of memory and desire and confusion and grief. It's the weight of America's involvement in the war."

O'Brien lives in central Texas, and, in alternating years since 2003, he's held the endowed chair of the M.F.A. program at Texas State University, San Marcos.

Maureen Howard was awarded the Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature on May 16, 2012, at the annual New York City ceremony. The members of the 2012 Awards Committee were Paul Auster, Louis Begley, Robert Brustein, Louise Glück, Philip Levine, Alison Lurie, and Joy Williams.

American poet Louise Glück presented the award. The Ceremonial citation for Howard noted that she "writes of the historical past, the present, and the future." Her work "is inventive, perceptive, and poetic. She tells the stories of Irish-American immigrants, small-town families, artists and actors, the very young and the very old, as well as the story of her own life, with equal skill and seriousness."

From Bridgeport, Connecticut, Maureen Howard was born Maureen Kearns in 1930. She attended Smith College, graduating with a B.A. in 1952. After graduation, she worked in publishing and advertising from 1952 to 1954. In 1960, Howard published her first novel, *Not a Word about Nightingales*, which became a bestseller.

Her other works include *Bridgeport Bus* (1965), *Before My Time* (1975), *Grace Abounding* (1982), *Expensive Habits* (1986), *Natural History* (1992), *A Lover's Almanac* (1998), *Big as Life: Three Tales for Spring* (2001), and *The Silver Screen* (2004). Her latest novel, *The Rags of Time*, the fourth in a quartet, was published in 2009.

Described as an "urban writer" in an interview with author Joanna Scott, Howard is said to be "an inventor who shapes her creations from found things, from the bric-à-brac of history—orange pencils (number two), gin and bitters, Georgian silver, rubber flip flops, angelfood cake decorated with miniature American flags."

Her award-winning autobiography, for which she is best known, *Facts of Life* was published in 1978. Considered to be a "classic of the genre," *Facts of Life* has been praised for evoking a "wonder of common things and the strangeness lurking in the seemingly obvious with great charm, wit, and energy."

Although the majority of her fictional characters are female, Howard has insisted on her preference for universal concerns. In her introduction to *Seven American Women Writers of the Twentieth Century*, Howard writes the following statement: "To my mind this is the most egalitarian manner in which to study women's literature—to presume that these women are artists first and do not have to be unduly praised or their reputations justified on grounds of sex."

In addition to *Seven American Women Writers*, Howard has also edited *The Penguin Book of Contemporary American Essays* and the centennial edition of *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Winner of a National Book Critics Circle Award for *Facts of Life*, Howard earned a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1967 and was named a Radcliffe Institute Fellow that same year. In 1988, she was awarded a fellowship by the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and, in 1993, she won the Literary Lion Award by the New York Public Library. She was nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction three times: in 1983 for *Grace Abounding*, in 1987 for *Expensive Habits*, and in 1993 for *Natural History*.

Howard has taught literature, drama, and creative writing at a number of American universities, including Princeton, Yale, The New School, University of California, Santa Barbara, CUNY, Columbia University, and Amherst College. She currently lives in New York City and teaches at Columbia.

On May 21, 2014, Sherman Alexie received the Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature at

the Academy's annual ceremonial in New York City. The members of the 2014 Awards Committee were Louis Begley, Louise Glück, Alison Lurie, Francine Prose, Mark Strand, and Charles Wright.

Presented by American playwright, novelist, and academic A. R. Gurney, the citation reads: "Sherman Alexie has turned his Native American heritage into remarkable fiction, poetry, and film. His novels and stories often deal with trouble and despair both on and off the reservation, but they are also sometimes wildly funny. His fine autobiographical novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, has won many awards, and he is also the author of the wonderful all-Native American movie, *Smoke Signals*, based on one of his own short stories."

Born in Spokane, Washington, in 1966, Alexie is a registered member of the Spokane tribe. He attended grammar school on the Spokane reservation in Wellpinit, Washington. In "Superman and Me," in which he describes his earliest response to books during his childhood on the reservation, Alexie writes, "We were poor by most standards, but one of my parents usually managed to find some minimum-wage job or another, which made us middle class by reservation standards. I had a brother and three sisters. We lived on a combination of irregular paychecks, hope, fear, and government-surplus food." Alexie was a smart boy and avid reader, finishing *Grapes of Wrath* in kindergarten when other children were "struggling through Dick and Jane."

It wasn't until he attended college at Washington State University that he discovered an anthology of Indian poetry, which had a profound change on his career path. He planned on becoming a pediatrician but found that he could better save lives through writing. After he took a creative writing course with Alex Kuo, he began to publish in magazines such as *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*, *New York Quarterly*, *Ploughshares*, and *Zyzzyva*. In 1991, he was awarded a poetry fellowship from the Washington State Arts Commission, and the following year, he received a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. His career began in 1992, when he published his first two collections of poetry: *I Would Steal Horses* and *The Business of Fancydancing*. Several more works followed in rapid succession, including a book of short stories for which he is best known, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), his first novel, *Reservation Blues* (1995), a film of his screenplay, *Smoke Signals* (1998), along with *Indian Killer* (1996), *The Toughest Indian in the World* (2000), *Flight* (2007), *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), *War Dances* (2009), *Face* (2009), *Blasphemy* (2012), and *What I've Stolen, What I've Earned* (2014).

His works have garnered many awards. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* received a PEN/Hemingway Award for best first book of fiction. He won the American Book Award for his novel *Reservation Blues*. *Smoke Signals* took top honors at the Sundance Film Festival. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* won the 2007 U.S. National Book Award for Young People's Literature and the Odyssey Award as best 2008 audiobook for young people. *War Dances* received the 2010 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. *Smoke Signals* broke barriers in 1998 for being the first all-Indian movie. In 2005, Alexie became a founding board member of Longhouse Media, a non-profit organization that is committed to teaching filmmaking skills to Native American youth, and to use media for cultural expression and social change. Alexie has long supported youth programs and initiatives dedicated to fostering at-risk Native American youth. He lives in Seattle with his wife and their two sons.

Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at the American Literature Association Conference

The Katherine Anne Porter Society's panel at the 26th American Literature Association annual conference took place on Saturday, May 23, 2015, in Boston. Darlene Unrue chaired the

well-attended session, which featured three papers: Laurel Bollinger's "Plague and Revelation: The Spanish Flu in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Pale Horse, Pale Rider,'" Melanie Benson Taylor's "A Beautiful Nothing: The Splendid Failures of Porter's 'Theft,'" and Ted Wojtasik's "Text and Subtext of Dream Imagery in Katherine Anne Porter's Fiction."

Our business meeting followed the session and addressed topics such as the balance in the treasury, the sixteenth volume of the newsletter, and current membership. We are happy to report that our membership has increased from last year, and that Ted Wojtasik has graciously volunteered to serve on the executive committee.

Ted Wojtasik, Melanie Benson Taylor, Laurel Bollinger, and Darlene Unrue, American Literature Association Conference, Boston, May 23, 2015. Photograph by Christine Grogan.

2017 American Literature Association Conference in Boston

The Katherine Anne Porter Society session at the 28th annual American Literature Association conference will be chaired by Professor Christine Hait of Columbia College. The topic of the session will be "Katherine Anne Porter and the Body." The session topic reflects Porter's intense exploration in her writing of subjects such as health, illness, reproduction, sex and sexuality, beauty, violence, death, and the relationship of the body to mind and spirit. Please email proposals of 250 words or less to Professor Hait at chrishait@columbiasc.edu. The deadline for submissions is December 16, 2016.

The conference will take place May 25-28, in Boston, Massachusetts. Conference details and information about hotel reservations will be available through the Web site of the American Literature Association. Information about the Porter activities planned for the conference will be posted on the society's Web site.