

# Newsletter

of the

Katherine Anne Porter

Society

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## Dear Members of the Katherine Anne Porter Society:

It is with great pleasure that the society announces the revival of the *Newsletter of The Katherine Anne Porter Society*. The last edition of the newsletter, Volume XIV, was published in July 2008. After printing fifteen issues dating from May 15, 1994, the society posted information on its redesigned Web site, hosted by the University of Maryland Libraries, to keep members abreast of activities and developments pertinent to the study of Katherine Anne Porter. Although we plan to continue publishing timely Porter news under our “News and Notes” section of the Web site, we are happy to reinstate the newsletter. The issues of the newsletter in PDF will remain available on the Web site, under “Society Publications.”

As you can imagine, we have much ground to cover as many exciting Porter-related events have taken place since the newsletter was last published. This edition covers the years 2008-2014. Over those six years, the society has been quite active. Included in this edition are reports from the annual American Literature

Association conference; an article about Porter and Victoria, Texas; news from the University of Maryland Libraries; information regarding Porter’s induction into the American Poets Corner; a write-up on the conference held at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, to celebrate *Ship of Fools*’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; and many other important pieces.

From 1994 to 2008, the *Newsletter of the Katherine Anne Porter Society* was published at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, by the Katherine Anne Porter Society. It resumes publication at the University of Maryland, College Park, Libraries.

In 2013, Christine Grogan (University of South Florida) was elected President of the society. Current members of the Executive Committee are Beth Alvarez (University of Maryland), Darlene Unrue (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), Alexandra Subramanian (California Lutheran University), Jerry Lee Findley (Independent Scholar), and Christine Hait (Columbia College).

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter!

Sincerely,

Christine Grogan  
President, Katherine Anne Porter Society



Katherine Anne Porter, circa 1935-1936, Notre Dame des Champs apartment, Paris, Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

## 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](mailto:alvarez@umd.edu), and/or Christine Grogan, President of the Katherine Anne Porter Society, [cgrogan@mail.usf.edu](mailto:cgrogan@mail.usf.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.

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## Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at the American Literature Association Conference, 2008-2014

On Saturday, May 24, 2014, Beth Alvarez chaired the Katherine Anne Porter Society sessions at the 25<sup>th</sup> ALA Conference in Washington, D.C. This was the first time in our history that we had two sessions at the ALA. There were three papers presented at each session. The first featured engaging essays by Karuna Bandi ("The Speculative World of Mrs. Whipple: A Re-reading of 'He' in the Light of Conceptual Metaphor Theory"), Kerry Hasler-Brooks ("She did not know what it was": Katherine Anne Porter, Mexico, and *Century Magazine*"), and Tabitha Morgan ("Inherited Images": Decolonizing a Transcultural Aesthetic in

Katherine Anne Porter's *Outline of Mexican Popular Arts and Crafts* and Anita Brenner's *Idols Behind Altars*"). Likewise, we heard three wonderful papers in the second session: Elizabeth DePriest's "Maternal and Creative Anxieties in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Rope,'" Linda Kornasky's "'Noon Wine' and American Literary Naturalism by Women Writers," and Christine Hait's "Competitive Mythmaking: Katherine Anne Porter and Ernest Hemingway in a Paris Bookshop."

The society's business meeting also took place on May 24. It opened with a tribute to Darlene Unrue on the occasion of her retirement from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Topics of the society's meeting included current membership (59 members and 4 honorary members), balance in the treasury (\$7,348.17), and revival of the newsletter.

The Katherine Anne Porter Society's session at the 24<sup>th</sup> American Literature Association annual conference took place on Friday, May 24, 2013, in Boston, Massachusetts. Christine Grogan chaired the session, "Reading and Teaching Katherine Anne Porter," which featured fascinating papers by Heather Fox ("Reading Katherine Anne Porter's *The Old Order* as a Reconstructive Process of Memory"), Raelene Bradley ("The Spivelton Mystery": From Vengeance to Art"), and Pat Bradley ("Old Mortality," 'Noon Wine,' and Robert Penn Warren's 'Red-Tail Hawk and Pyre of Youth'). Topics of the society's business meeting included current membership, balance in the treasury, the society Web site, and bylaws revision.

On May 25, 2012, Jerry Findley chaired the society's session at the 23<sup>rd</sup> American Literature Association conference, titled "*Ship of Fools*' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: A Panel Discussion." The conference was held at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco in Embarcadero Center from May 24-27. Thomas Austenfeld provided a recap of the conference in Switzerland, followed by discussion and comments by participants Darlene Unrue, Beth Alvarez, and Alexandra Subramanian.

At the 2011 American Literature Association conference at the Westin Hotel in Boston, May 26-29, Christine Hait moderated a round table discussion titled “Katherine Anne Porter and Kay Boyle: Connections.” After Hait’s introduction, Beth Alvarez delivered a paper on “‘A Desert Cactus’: The Literary Friendship of Katherine Anne Porter and Kay Boyle,” and Thomas Austenfeld presented “Recollection and Revolution: Katherine Anne Porter and Kay Boyle as Poets.”

On Friday, May 28, 2010, Alexandra Subramanian moderated the roundtable discussion entitled “‘The Downward Path’: Depictions of Childhood in Katherine Anne Porter’s Fiction” at the 21<sup>st</sup> ALA Conference in San Francisco, California. Darlene Unrue, Beth Alvarez, Christine Grogan, and Alexandra Subramanian all contributed short papers on the chosen topic, which was followed by a lively discussion among the panelists and audience members.

Darlene Unrue chaired the KAP session at the 20<sup>th</sup> ALA Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, in May 2009. Three papers were given at the session, which was titled “Katherine Anne Porter: The Transformation of Autobiography into Art”: Christine Grogan’s “‘...but she was too free’: Aunt Amy’s Mysterious Hemorrhage in ‘Old Mortality,’” Wayne McDonald’s “Out of Place, Out of Time: The Lusk Committee in ‘Pale Horse, Pale Rider,’” and Laura Furman and Lynn Miller’s “Katherine Anne Porter as ‘Passenger on the Ship of Fools’: A Play.”

“Innocence and Experience in the Stories of Katherine Anne Porter” was the title for the KAP session at the 19<sup>th</sup> ALA Conference in San Francisco, California, in May 2008. Jerry Findley chaired the session, which featured three papers: “‘fools of life, ... fugitives from death’ in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Holiday’” by Beth Alvarez, “The Ethnographic Participant-Observers as Narrator: Ethics and Memory in Katherine Anne Porter” by Kellie Warren, and “‘Magic’:

Porter Breaks the Spell of Her Publishing Commitments,” by Alexandra Subramanian.

## Revisions to the Bylaws

In 2013, members discussed and agreed upon revisions of the society’s bylaws primarily to address changes to the conduct of the society’s business. Changes, subsequently adopted by vote of the membership, included the following:

1. Deleting the references to conducting society business by mail (Articles IV.C. and V.B.). Although previous elections and votes on bylaw amendments were initiated by traditional mail, virtually all of the members who participated in the most recent votes responded via e-mail. Members who do not have e-mail will continue to receive ballots and other communications by mail.
2. Deleting the text describing annual dues for Student Members (Article VI.A). As the society’s dues are very modest, there never has been a separate reduced rate for Student Members.
3. Revising the text relating to payment of dues (Article VI.B). It simply codifies the actual practice since the society treasury was moved to the University of Maryland Foundation in December 2008.

In 2009, members discussed and agreed upon revisions of the society’s bylaws, which included the elimination of references to the society’s newsletter, as the printed publication ceased with Volume XIV (July 2008). Also approved was the deletion of all text describing an Advisory Board and additional officers of the society (Secretary and Editor of the newsletter). Finally, the provision that designated that a specific number of members be appointed by the President to the Executive Committee has now been eliminated. These revisions were formally adopted by a vote of the full membership conducted by mail and e-mail.

## Katherine Anne Porter in Victoria, Texas: Eight Months that Charted Her Future

By Darlene Unrue  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

*I presented the following essay in considerably longer form at the Brontë Club in Victoria, Texas, February 18, 2010, as part of the University of Houston-Victoria/American Book Review Reading Series. During that visit I became indebted to a number of persons, including especially Katherine McHaney, Secretary/Treasurer of the Victoria Advocate, who founded the society column in which the advertisement for the Misses Porter's school appeared and with the help of Gary Dunnam, of Victoria Preservation Inc., who provided the photographs of Victoria in the turn-of-the-century era.*

In the early fall of 1905 fifteen-year-old Katherine Porter arrived in Victoria, Texas, with her father, Harrison Boone Porter, and her two sisters, twenty-year-old Gay and thirteen-year-old Mary Alice. Her eighteen-year-old brother, Paul, was not with them. He had joined the Navy the previous spring and was preparing to sail to Cuba on the *USS Charleston*.<sup>1</sup>

Katherine, Harrison, Gay, and Mary Alice had come to Victoria from San Antonio, where the family had lived since 1903, two years after the death of Harrison's widowed mother, Catharine Ann Skaggs Porter, who had opened her Hays County home to Harrison and his children after the death in 1892 of his wife, Alice, the children's mother. Katherine, named Callie Russell Porter at her birth and called "Callie" throughout childhood, spent nine years under the protection of her disciplined grandmother. With her grandmother's death in 1901 and her family's displacement from the only real home she knew, she left childhood beset with anxieties and a fragile sense of identity.

Callie carried with her the childhood dilemma of deciding what she wanted to be when she grew

up, for throughout childhood she had juggled three passions: performing, storytelling or storywriting, and reading. Grandmother Porter was a legendary storyteller, and perhaps it was from her that young Callie received an impulse to tell and write stories. Her passion for reading began in the Kyle public school and was nurtured by her well-read father, who valued education and placed his children in school wherever he lived, however temporarily. In 1904 when Harrison heard about the Thomas School, newly opened in San Antonio under the wing of the Methodist church, he scraped together enough money to enroll his daughters there as day students and his son in a nearby military academy.

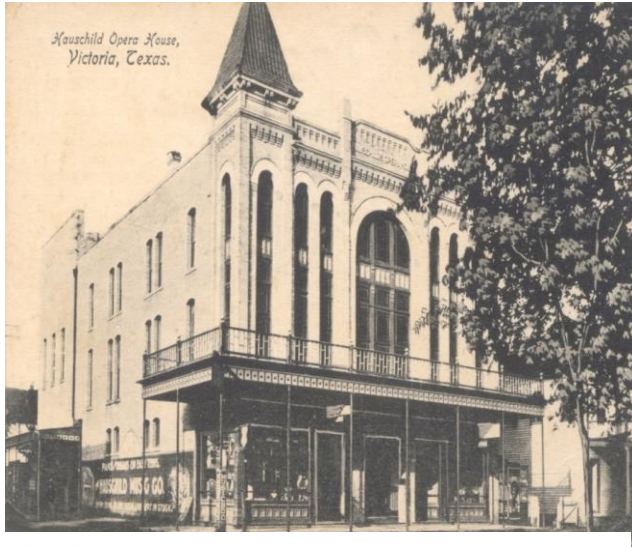
It was at the beginning of her year of study at the Thomas School in 1904 that Callie decided to informally rename herself and chose "Katherine," a variation on her grandmother's "Catharine." During that year, she also further developed two of her three passions, that is, reading and performing. Writing, the creative kind, seems to have been set aside.

Katherine was a good student in history, French, and English literature. Despite her pleasure in her expanded reading, however, she was sure by now that she wanted to be a performer, perhaps an actress or perhaps a singer. Her ambition was inflamed by the dramatic performances she and other Thomas School students attended in San Antonio, which was a stop for touring performers such as the British actress Lily Langtry. Already stunningly beautiful at fourteen and fifteen, five-foot-two with curly black hair and blue eyes that tended toward violet, she was taking classes in drama at the Thomas School and violin and singing lessons at the nearby Lady of the Lake Convent. At the close of the school year in May her drama teacher urged her to consider joining a local summer stock company.

In the summer of 1905 Harrison gave Katherine and also Gay permission to perform with the Albert C. Taylor Company at the Summer Theater in San Antonio's Electric Park. When the summer theater season ended, Katherine and Gay, heady with their acting success, were



convinced that they could capitalize on their experience. It was then that they persuaded their father to move to Victoria, a little more than a hundred miles from San Antonio. Katherine, in particular, seemed to think of San Antonio as a shabby town with saloons on every corner and a dangerous red-light district. In contrast, Victoria would have seemed much more respectable. They probably read about Victoria in the *San Antonio Express*, which frequently published articles about Victoria written by Victoria's town leaders to encourage visitors and new businesses. One such article, titled "Victoria, City of Roses," described the lovely town "with its elegant homes and substantial business houses," the "wealth of its citizens," and its beautiful buildings, including an imposing opera house.<sup>2</sup> Upon their arrival in September Harrison and his three lovely daughters moved into the Pridham House, a boarding establishment on Juan Linn Street, and he rented a room on nearby Santa Rosa Street where Katherine and Gay as the "Misses Porter" could offer lessons in "music, physical culture and dramatic reading," as they advertised that fall.<sup>3</sup>



Victoria's Opera House: One of the fine buildings that symbolized to Katherine Porter the town's wealth and culture.

Before 1905 ended, two events occurred that were to have life-changing effects on Katherine Porter: First, she shifted her focus from performing to writing, and, second, at a



Shield's Drug Store with the Brontë Club's library on the second floor.

Christmas dance she met a young man who would teach her the meaning of betrayal and disillusionment. The shift in her artistic focus came about because of the influence of the Brontë Club and its thousand-volume lending library established in a space above Shield's Drug Store. There Katherine renewed her passion for reading and at the same time was inspired to begin the writing that eventually would make her fame. Although the Brontë Club was said to be named specifically for Charlotte Brontë, it was Emily Brontë and *Wuthering Heights* that dazzled Katherine Porter. She read it over and over, as she would for the next fifteen years, trying to duplicate its lyrical prose and psychological depth. "I simply adored it," she said.<sup>4</sup>

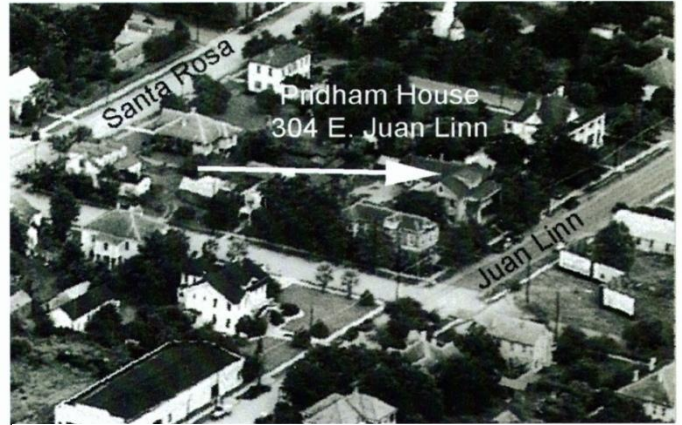
We know that she started writing stories in the fall of 1905 because of a letter she received in December from her brother, Paul, who had recently landed in Cuba with his fellow sailors and found Katherine's letters with stories she had written waiting for him. He wrote her in December —"Dear Little Sister"—to tell her about his adventures during the voyage and also to tell her this: "Continue your stories," he wrote, "for they are fine."<sup>5</sup> Because she destroyed her earliest efforts at writing, we don't know specifically the subjects or forms of those stories. She later said that she first tried writing imitations of works by those writers she admired, and we can suppose that her early apprentice stories had echoes of *Wuthering Heights*. When she was in her seventies, after she had achieved critical acclaim and substantial

wealth, she was able to tie one of the distinguishing traits of her mature aesthetic to her discovery of *Wuthering Heights* more than a half century earlier. “Any true work of art,” she explained to an interviewer in 1963, “has got to give you the feeling of reconciliation—what the Greeks would call catharsis, the purification of your mind and imagination—through an ending that is enduring because it is right and true. . . . One of the most perfect and marvelous endings in literature—it raises my hair now” she said, “—is the little boy at the end of *Wuthering Heights*, crying that he’s afraid to go across the moor because there’s a man and woman walking there.”<sup>6</sup>

The young man Katherine met at the fateful Christmas dance was nineteen-year-old John Henry Koontz, who worked in Lafayette, Louisiana, and was visiting his family in Inez, Texas, during the holidays. Katherine and John were instantly attracted to one another, and shortly afterward Katherine was invited to the Koontz ranch. Soon Katherine and John told their families they wanted to get married. Although Harrison and John’s parents voiced objections, in the face of the young persons’ determination all three parents agreed to a wedding after Katherine’s sixteenth birthday the following May.<sup>7</sup>

May 19, 1906, four days after Katherine’s sixteenth birthday, Harrison and his daughters moved from Victoria to Lufkin, where Harrison had cousins with whom they could stay. A social note in the *Victoria Advocate* announced the move: “H.B. Porter and his three daughters, Misses Gay, Alice, and K.R., left today for Lufkin where they will permanently remain.”<sup>8</sup> In all likelihood, their money simply ran out, and Katherine and Gay were not earning enough to pay the rent for their rooms at the Pridham house and for their studio on Santa Rosa Street. Katherine and John’s wedding took place in Lufkin June 20, 1906, with a Methodist minister officiating.<sup>9</sup>

Katherine and John Koontz’s barren marriage, which lasted nine years, was from the beginning fraught with troubles. When the marriage was legally dissolved in 1915, John signed the



Aerial view of the Pridham House, the Porters’ boarding house on Juan Linn Street

divorce decree, admitting that he was frequently drunk and so physically abusive that his wife regularly suffered broken bones and that once he beat her unconscious with a hairbrush. In the divorce decree she asked that her name be legally changed from “Katherine Koontz” to “Katherine Porter.” Soon she began giving her name as “Katherine Anne Porter,” signaling her full identification with her paternal grandmother and claiming the name that would be synonymous with classically structured prose fiction so powerfully lucid it became one of the hallmarks of modernist American literature.

So much was set into motion in Victoria. In 1905 she concluded once and for all that she wanted to be a writer, and, with her precipitous and naïve decision to marry so young and to marry the wrong man, she embarked on the experiences that would provide the deep themes of her fiction: betrayal, disillusionment, and the futile search for home and love. In her fiction she made the dividing line between innocence and knowledge at the age of sixteen, her age when she left Victoria, Texas, married John Koontz, and set forth on the rest of her life.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> General biographical facts are drawn from my *Katherine Anne Porter: The Life of an Artist* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> “Victoria, City of Roses,” appeared in several issues of the *Victoria Advocate* in August 1905.

<sup>3</sup> The “advertisement” appeared as a social note in the “Local and Personal” column in the *Victoria Advocate* November 15, 1905. It reads: “Misses Porter—studio of music, physical culture and dramatic reading. 107 Santa Rosa Street.”

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Thompson, “Katherine Anne Porter: An Interview,” in Joan Givner, ed. *Katherine Anne Porter: Conversations* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987), 80.

<sup>5</sup> Harrison Paul Porter to Katherine Anne Porter, 6 December 1905, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, University of Maryland Libraries.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, 88-89.

<sup>7</sup> Joan Givner uncovered Porter’s first marriage and significant details of Porter’s relationship with the Koontz family. See *Katherine Anne Porter: A Life*, rev. edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 86-103.

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to Thomas Shelton, curator of the Institute of Texas Cultures photograph collection at the University of Texas, San Antonio, Libraries, for discovering the social note in the *Victoria Advocate* announcing the move. For reasons unknown Katherine had begun calling herself “K.R.,” obliquely acknowledging “Russell,” one of her birth names.

<sup>9</sup> The wedding was a double wedding with Gay marrying Thomas H. Holloway, whom she also had met in Victoria.

## Porter News from the University of Maryland Libraries

By Beth Alvarez,  
University of Maryland

There have been some significant changes at the University of Maryland Libraries since activities were last reported in 2008. I retired as Curator of Literary Manuscripts effective October 1, 2011, and was appointed Emerita effective December 2011. I have remained active both at the

University of Maryland Libraries and in the Katherine Anne Porter Society. Special Collections librarian Ann Hudak assumed curatorial responsibility for the Libraries’ Porter holdings after my retirement until her own retirement in July 2013. Laura French, Interim Special Collections librarian, stepped into the breach until December 2013, when Lauren Brown, Manager of Special Collections, took on the responsibility for literary manuscripts. 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 Lauren Brown at [lbrown3@umd.edu](mailto:lbrown3@umd.edu), 301-405-9059. His mailing address is 2208B Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Another significant development took place in Summer 2014. Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) implemented a new system that requires researchers using materials to register for a user account. This account allows researchers to manage their research online. 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 “Log In” 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 May 2008, finding aids for four Porter-related collections were completed and another was substantially revised. The finding aid for the papers of Isabel Bayley, who served as Porter’s first literary trustee from 1983 until her death in 1993, was completed in 2011 and may be accessed at <http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/1540>. The largest portion of the Bayley’s papers was donated by her husband to the Libraries in 1994, with additional donations in 1998 and 2002. Comprising 39 linear feet and dating from circa

1900 to 1993, Bayley's papers include materials she created, received, or collected during her lifetime (1911-1993). The materials include correspondence; manuscripts and drafts of both published and unpublished literary works, notes, and research materials; legal and financial documentation; personal materials; newspaper and magazine clippings; print material; serials; manuscripts written by other individuals; video recordings; three-dimensional memorabilia; and photographs. Among the most notable items in the collection are Bayley's correspondence with Katherine Anne Porter, friends and family, literary colleagues, publishers, lawyers, faculty and staff of several universities and institutions, and individuals seeking permission to publish or make use of the intellectual property residing in Porter's work. Also of particular interest are research materials for and drafts of *Letters of Katherine Anne Porter*, the edition of Porter's correspondence that Bayley edited and published in 1990, and drafts of Bayley's memoir of her relationship with Porter. The collection also includes materials documenting Bayley's term as Porter's literary trustee.

The finding aid (<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/4932>) for the Clark Dobson Collection, donated to the Libraries between 2000 and 2008, was completed in 2009. Edward Clark Dobson (1939- ), a higher education professor and administrator, developed a warm personal relationship with Katherine Anne Porter that began in 1972 and endured until her death in 1980. During their relationship, they frequently attended Washington, D.C., area concerts and social events. Dobson began collecting Katherine Anne Porter items in 1976, when Porter gave Dobson a copy of her *A Christmas Story* as a Christmas gift. The collection consists of correspondence, mostly written to and from Katherine Anne Porter; publications; photographs; and memorabilia, which document Porter's literary career and relationship with Dobson.

The Robert Morris papers, consisting of seven items donated to the Libraries in 2000, were processed and made accessible online (<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/7852>) in 2010. Vice president of University National Bank,

Robert Morris (1915-2001) came into contact with Katherine Anne Porter when she became a customer of the College Park, Maryland, branch at which he was the manager in 1971. Morris served as Porter's personal banker after she secured a loan from his bank. This collection of correspondence, six of which are Porter's letters to Morris, detail Porter's accounts and the progress on the loan she had taken during this time.

The Desmond Willson papers finding aid (<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/14077>) was completed in 2011. South African diplomat Willson and Katherine Anne Porter became acquainted in Washington, D.C. Their correspondence, initiated during 1961 when both maintained residences in the District of Columbia, continued when Willson's diplomatic postings took him to San Francisco, South Africa, and Switzerland. The Desmond Willson Papers include fifteen letters and postcards Porter sent him between June 10, 1961, and December 15, 1967. Subjects include her work, common friends, travel, current events, and her health. The collection also includes clippings and a publication.

The finding aid for the papers of Porter's nephew Paul Porter (<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/1531>) was substantially revised in 2011. In October 2010, Paul Porter (1921-2012) donated additional materials for his papers. In Spring 2011, additional materials donated by Mr. Porter in September 2004 and the October 2010 donation were incorporated into the collection. The bulk of the materials consisted of correspondence and other printed matter that were incorporated into the existing Series 1, Correspondence, and Series 3, Printed Matter and Notes. Other materials incorporated at this time include a number of audio and video tapes, as well as books, photographs, and memorabilia items.

Porter and Porter-related acquisitions since 2008 include materials that have been incorporated into her papers and personal library. Clark Dobson donated four circa 1971-1972 color snapshots of Porter and Robert Beach, Jack Horner, and Roger Francisco that were taken at



Porter's College Park apartment. A copy of the June 1960 issue of *Harper's Magazine* in which Porter's "The Fig Tree" was published was donated by Jane DeMouy. This copy was inscribed by Porter to "Dear David" in January 1966. During the May 2014 "Katherine Anne Porter in Letters and Life" event, Ted Wotajsik read from and subsequently donated Porter's annotated copy of *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Third Series* (1967).

The Libraries also purchased additional materials for Porter's papers. They include a copy of David Diamond's musical setting of Porter's "Anniversary in a County Cemetery" (1942), and a second copy of a 1964 photograph of Porter and mariachi musicians in Guadalajara with a lengthy Porter inscription. Porter's January 10, 1931, letter to Lucille Clayton Robinson, whom she had known in Denver in 1918-1919 provides some interesting details of a period for which there is little documentation. The largest purchase of materials consisted of a grouping related to the publication of Porter's *Collected Stories*. Consisting primarily of correspondence exchanged between Porter and William Jovanovich of Harcourt, Brace, between April 1964 and November 1966, this accession includes seven items not previously among the Harcourt, Brace files in Porter's papers.

Additional materials were also acquired for the papers of Paul Porter and those of Herbert Schaumann. In addition to the October 2010 donation made by Mr. Porter himself described above, his brother, Charles, and sister-in-law donated inscribed copies of books from his library and some Porter-related ephemera in 2013. In 2011, Blaine Butler, a friend of long standing, donated two items that had previously belonged to Mr. Porter, a framed print from Goya's *Tauromaquia* series, and a copy of *Short Novels of Colette* with an introduction by Glenway Wescott (1951). For the Herbert Schaumann papers, the Libraries purchased ten items, all but one of them correspondence Porter sent to Herbert Schaumann between August 1944 and December 1946. Porter and Schaumann met in 1944 and had a short, but intense relationship, documented in the

Schaumann papers (<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/1517>).

Volunteer docents continued to staff the Katherine Anne Porter Room between September 2008 and May 2012. Until my retirement, Shirley Bauer, Freddy Baer, Maria Walsh, Pamela Gregory, Susan Moger, and Nancy Pond served on Monday and Thursday afternoons. During the 2012-2013 academic year, four of them, Shirley Bauer, Maria Walsh, Pamela Gregory, and Nancy Pond, allowed the room to be open to the public on Wednesday afternoons. Since that time, I have staffed the room on Tuesday 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 annual visits. Tours of the Porter Room were also offered during each of the University of Maryland's Maryland Day festivities between 2009 and 2014. 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.

During the April 2009 Maryland Day, campus visitors were able to enjoy a special Porter Room exhibit, "Katherine Anne Porter and Yaddo: 'peace, repose, and working atmosphere.'" Curated by Anna Yallouris, a graduate student in the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland, the exhibit was mounted to coincide with "Yaddo: Making American Culture" a major exhibit at the New York Public Library's Fifth Avenue Humanities and Social Sciences Library. The NYPL exhibition, on display from October 2008 until February 2009, explored the ways that Yaddo and the artists it supported were not sequestered from the social, political, and economic changes of the twentieth century. The Porter Room display focused on Porter's long association with Yaddo and featured correspondence, manuscripts, photographs, and other items from her papers and was on view from October 2008 through July 2009.

Anyone who has questions concerning the Porter Room or the Libraries' Porter holdings should not hesitate to contact Lauren Brown, 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, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, [alvarez@umd.edu](mailto:alvarez@umd.edu). Information about Katherine Anne Porter resources on the Libraries' Web site can be located at <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/rguide/kap.jsp> and <http://lib.guides.umd.edu/KatherineAnnePorter>.



Langston Hughes, Helen Kuo, Katherine Anne Porter, Merle Marsicano, Yaddo, June 3, 1940. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

## Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust

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

The University of Maryland Libraries have long enjoyed a special relationship with the works of Katherine Anne Porter. Her papers form the nucleus of the Libraries' archival holdings in the field of literature and are among the most treasured holdings of Special Collections and University Archives. The collection supports not only the international community of Porter enthusiasts and literary scholars but also offers students, faculty, and other users a hands-on opportunity to work with primary sources related to a major author. In 2011, the University

of Maryland Libraries and Porter's legacy became even more closely connected. In January of that year, the legal dispute over the literary trust was settled by court-ordered mediation, and, in February, the mediator named Patricia Steele, Dean of Libraries, a literary trustee. Dean Steele initially held this position jointly with Beverly Lowry. On February 23, 2011, the newly appointed literary trust met to begin discussion of the future of Porter's legacy. Ms. Lowry resigned as co-trustee in the autumn of 2012, leaving Dean Steele as sole trustee. The literary trust continued to retain the services of Fred Courtright of the Permissions Company to handle permissions for literary works; Mr. Courtright has handled Porter-related literary rights issues since the early 1990s, when Barbara Thompson Davis retained his services to assist in this work. Since 2011, the University Libraries have managed the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust and have made good use of the Trust's resources to promote KAP's works and bring her writings to a larger audience and a new generation.

Because of the Trust's support, the University of Maryland Libraries have been able to engage in a number of interesting Porter-related projects. Perhaps the most notable of the Trust's recent activities has been its provision of financial support for the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project. This project brings together experts in literary collections, information technology, and archival sciences from Special Collections and University Archives, as well as from the Libraries' Digital Systems and Stewardship division. In addition, personnel from the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), one of the world's leading centers for digital humanities, have consulted on the project. Most importantly, the Trust has funded the work of an emerging scholar as graduate assistant on the Correspondence Project. Liz DePriest is a doctoral candidate in the English Department at the University of Maryland. Her dissertation, titled *Reproductive Modernism*, examines issues of reproduction and maternity in American women's modernist fiction. The insights she has gained about Porter from working on the Correspondence Project and from her own

research in the KAP papers, which dates back to 2009, will form the backbone of her dissertation chapter on Porter. The Trust is pleased to support the Correspondence Project by funding Ms. DePriest's efforts. The endeavors of the entire project team has been so successful that the Trust has agreed to continue its assistance to the project, including Ms. DePriest's work, for another year.

The Trust has also been successful in identifying opportunities to promote Porter's works in collaboration with commercial publishers. Open Roads Integrated Media, a digital publishing firm with a catalog of major authors in a variety of genres, approached Dean Steele in 2013 to inquire about rights to publish a digital edition of *Ship of Fools*, Porter's 1962 novel. After investigating the issue of rights, consultation with counsel determined that the Trust held the digital rights to *Ship of Fools*. The Libraries have therefore initiated a partnership with Open Roads and are now finalizing an agreement to publish a digital edition of Porter's only full-length novel. This collaboration between the Libraries, representing the Trust, and Open Roads, with its experience in creating digital works of literature, will bring *Ship of Fools* to a new and wider audience through the power of technology. The Trust will receive revenue from the sale of the work, and proceeds will go back into the Trust's holding to fund future projects based on Porter's works.

During the past few years the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust has actively promoted the Porter collection to the general public, to fans and scholars of Porter's works, and to literary scholars around the globe. Creative endeavors like the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project combine literary studies and archival science with cutting edge technology. Innovative partnerships such as the collaboration with Open Roads to publish a digital edition of *Ship of Fools* have the potential to bring Porter's work to a worldwide audience. The Trust will continue its efforts with these and similar projects to advance and promote the works and legacy of Katherine Anne Porter for generations of readers and scholars to come.

## The Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project: Making Porter's Letters Available Online

By Liz DePriest  
University of Maryland

At the University of Maryland Libraries, we are currently developing an online digital collection of Katherine Anne Porter's family correspondence. We look forward to making our Special Collections holdings available to the public through this project, and we hope it will contribute to the evolving practices of projects committed to digital preservation and access. We believe the KAP Correspondence Project will also enrich Porter scholarship and provide a useful resource for researchers studying her life and work. The project is a collaboration between the University of Maryland Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives and the Digital Systems and Stewardship division. It is supported by a grant from the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust.

The collection to be published online includes approximately 2,000 letters, postcards, telegrams, and other forms of correspondence that Porter sent to over 20 members of her family, numbering over 5,000 pages total. Her most frequent correspondents in the collection include her sister Gay Porter Hollaway, husbands Albert Erskine, Jr., and Eugene Pressly, nephew Paul Porter, Jr., and niece Ann Hollaway Heintze. The collection spans the years of 1912 through 1977, and Porter sent the included letters from eight different countries.

Reading these letters gives users a wide range of insights into Porter's relationships, attitudes, and experiences. They document her exposure to major cultural and historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as her time spent in Mexico following the Mexican Revolution, in Germany before WWII began, and in Washington, D.C., during WWII and the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. The letters also document her personal opinions about the lives and works of

fellow writers including Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, William Faulkner, Hart Crane, and close friend Josephine Herbst.

Early in the project, we scanned all of the original letters to create digital surrogates. These image files will serve as the focal point of the Web site, allowing users to view the letters themselves rather than merely viewing transcriptions. We are working to create an online resource that will serve Porter scholars who have experience using traditional archives as well as users who come to the site with little to no prior knowledge of Porter or her work. As a result, the Web site will also include supplemental materials that provide context for Porter's life and relationships as they are presented in the letters. These materials will include a comprehensive timeline of Porter's life, descriptions of her travels, biographical overviews of each correspondent, and more.

In addition to giving the public unprecedented access to the letters, the digital environment will provide the Web site's users with a wide variety of previously unavailable research and search capabilities. We have created and refined an extensive set of metadata that categorizes the correspondence by recipient, date, and location, so users will find it easy to sort the letters using these categories. The typewritten letters have been processed by optical character recognition software, and we are working to manually transcribe the handwritten letters, so users will also be able to search for specific words and phrases. We hope these various capabilities will make it easy for users to isolate particular letters that will serve their research purposes.

We are also working to develop Web content and tools that will help users approach and understand the materials in new ways. The data we have collected allows us to create visualizations that complement traditional close reading. For example, we have begun experimenting with generating visual representations of Porter's travels that give users an idea of how far her letters travelled.

We've also been working on graphs that show the frequency of letters Porter wrote to different people, at different times, and from different

places. We've experimented with running the letters through topic modeling software that uses algorithms to create groupings of letters based upon shared content. This process has generated groups of letters in which Porter writes about publishing, clothing, war, or cats, for example.

We anticipate that the collection will be available online in 2015. For more information, please visit the KAP Correspondence Project Web site, <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/kap>. We also share regular updates about the project's progress on twitter. You can find us by following @KAPorterLetters and/or by visiting <https://twitter.com/kaporterletters>. I am also happy to answer further questions about the project via email at [edepries@umd.edu](mailto:edepries@umd.edu).

*Liz DePriest is a graduate assistant working on the KAP Correspondence Project, a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at the University of Maryland, and a member of the Katherine Anne Porter Society.*

## “‘The Truth that Finally Overtakes You’: Katherine Anne Porter”

Porter, who famously observed, “Experience is what really happens to you in the long run; the truth that finally overtakes you,” was the subject of May 22, 2014, panel presented at the National Press Club, in Washington, D.C., for the American Women Writers National Museum. Dr. Christine Grogan, president of the Katherine Anne Porter Society, moderated a panel consisting of members of the KAPS Executive Committee. Grogan is a visiting professor at the University of South Florida. Primarily interested in modern American women writers, Grogan has published articles in *Feminist Studies in English Literature and Women's Studies: An Inter-disciplinary Journal*.

KAP's residency in the D.C. area, including places she lived, people she knew, and work created or published during that period, were covered by Dr. Beth Alvarez, former Curator of Literary Manuscripts at the University of Maryland, College Park, Libraries where KAP's papers are housed.



Dr. Christine Hait discussed Porter's best-selling 1962 novel *Ship of Fools*, which was made into a 1965 movie. Hait is a professor of English at Columbia College, Columbia, S.C. In addition to serving on the executive committee of the Katherine Anne Porter Society and writing about Porter, she also is a co-founder of the Kay Boyle Society, and her most recent article is entitled "Publication and Recognition: Kay Boyle and the O. Henry Award."

Challenges of writing KAP's biography were discussed by Dr. Darlene Unrue, Distinguished Professor of English at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Unrue has published numerous articles and books on KAP, including *Katherine Anne Porter: The Life of an Artist* (2005) and *Selected Letters of Katherine Anne Porter: Chronicles of a Modern Woman* (2012). Professor Unrue is the recipient of many national and international awards and honors.

Dr. Jerry Findley came to the study of Porter through his work on the literature of the Early Modern Period, the period Porter calls "her stamping ground." Findley taught courses on the literary masterpieces of the Western Tradition during teaching stints at universities across the South and Midwest. Recently retired and focusing on Porter, he addressed KAP's "political understanding."



Christine Hait; Christine Grogan; Darlene Unrue; Jerry Findley; Janice Law, founder of the American Women Writers National Museum; and Beth Alvarez, Washington, D.C., May 22, 2014.

The video recording of the program can be viewed on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v\\_yojvOA84z0A&list=UURXbKJ2IoGMUbYq4jEmdCcA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v_yojvOA84z0A&list=UURXbKJ2IoGMUbYq4jEmdCcA).

## American Academy of Arts and Letters Katherine Anne Porter Prize, 2010-2014

Since the last edition of the newsletter, the American Academy of Arts and Letters presented the Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature to three talented writers: Tim O'Brien in 2010, Maureen Howard in 2012, and Sherman Alexie in 2014. Katherine Anne Porter was elected to the Institute in 1941 and the Academy in 1966. In 2001, the Literary Trust of Katherine Anne Porter established the biennial award in the amount of \$20,000 "to honor a prose writer 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, and John Edgar Wideman in 2008. The next edition of the newsletter will feature more information about O'Brien, Howard, and Alexie.

## Porter Inducted into Poets Corner

By Beth Alvarez  
University of Maryland

In early November 2012, Katherine Anne Porter joined forty-four other distinguished American literary figures in Poets Corner at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City. The formal induction took place at the conclusion of the cathedral's evensong on Sunday, November 4. In addition to the Reverend Canon Thomas Miller and the cathedral choir, participants included Marilyn Nelson, Poet in Residence at the Cathedral, and Rosanna Warren, poet, academic, and goddaughter of Porter.

"A Celebration of Katherine Anne Porter and A Tribute to William Jay Smith" was held the following evening, Monday, November 5. Smith, a dear and valued friend of Porter, was

second Poet in Residence at the cathedral and a former U.S. Poet Laureate. The program opened with a welcome from Reverend Canon Miller. Kelly Cherry, Poet Laureate of Virginia and American Poets Corner Elector, and poet Annie Finch, Stonecoast MFA Director at the University of Southern Maine, read from Porter's work. Singer Amy Justman, accompanied by Charity Wicks, performed works by Weill and Poulenc. Poet Alfred Corn, another elector of the American Poets Corner, read "Braggioni," a poem "after Katherine Anne Porter." Rosanna Warren contributed a reflection on her godmother, and Marilyn Nelson spoke on "The Poets Corner: A Meditation." Darlene Unrue addressed "Katherine Anne Porter's Commitment to Art," and Beth Alvarez explored "Katherine Anne Porter and William Jay Smith: A Literary Friendship in Letters." Smith's remarks and reading of his poem "A Rose for Katherine Anne Porter" were particularly memorable as well as moving. Porter and Smith developed a warm and mutually supportive relationship in the 1950s which continued until Porter's death in 1980. Also attending the event was Smith's wife, Sonja, who also shared a mutual and fond admiration with Porter.

Located in the Cathedral's Arts Bay on the north side of the nave, the American Poets Corner memorializes the literature of the United States. Inaugurated on May 7, 1984, Poets Corner includes Americans from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, from Anne Bradstreet, Washington Irving, and William Cullen Bryant to Robert Lowell, James Baldwin, and Sylvia Plath. The Cathedral's Poet in Residence, appointed by its Dean, serves for a term of five years. The poet in turn appoints the Electors, for staggered terms and chosen considering geographical and genre diversity. Former Poets Corner Electors have included Eudora Welty, William Jay Smith, Joseph Brodsky, Richard Wilbur, Walker Percy, and Robert Penn Warren. In the spring, each Elector nominates a writer deceased for at least twenty-five years. After the Electors and Poet in Residence select a candidate for induction, they agree on the line to be engraved on the inductee's stone. The line engraved on Porter's

is "Love must be learned, and learned again and again; there is no end to it." Further information on Poets Corner and a complete list of inductees, Poets in Residence, and Electors can be found at <http://www.stjohndivine.org/programs/american-poets-corner>.

## *Narrenschiff/Ship of Fools:* A Transatlantic Encounter University of Fribourg, Switzerland

By Christine Hait  
Columbia College

The May 2012 conference "*Narrenschiff/Ship of Fools: A Transatlantic Encounter*" brought scholars from Europe and the United States together in Fribourg, Switzerland, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Katherine Anne Porter's *Ship of Fools*.



Hans Ruef, Beth Alvarez, Joachim Knappe, Darlene Unrue, Thomas Austenfeld, Jewel Spears Brooker, Dimitar Daphinoff, Christine Hait, Robert Brinkmeyer, Alexandra Subramanian, Arnd Beise, and John Unrue, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, May 2012.

Organized by Thomas Austenfeld, Professor of American Literature, University of Fribourg, and generously funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research, participants in the two-day conference explored specifically the connections between Porter's novel and Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, the late medieval allegory from which Porter's novel takes its name, and more generally Porter's relationship to European thought and literature.

American scholars participating in the conference included Beth Alvarez, Robert Brinkmeyer, Jewel Spears Brooker, Christine Hait, Alexandra Subramanian, and Darlene Harbour Unrue. European scholars participating included Dimiter Daphinoff, Joachim Knappe, and Hans Ruef. The beautiful environment of Fribourg and the kind hospitality of all at the University of Fribourg created a situation conducive to intellectual exchange and fellowship.



Christine Hait, Bob Brinkmeyer, Beth Alvarez, Alexandra Subramanian, Jewel Spears Brooker, Joachim Knappe, Anne Marie Austenfeld, Thomas Austenfeld (partially obscured), and Dimiter Daphinoff, Basel, Switzerland, May 2012.

A visit to Basel, Switzerland, was a highlight of the conference. Conference participants walked the streets Porter walked during her stay in 1932, and they enjoyed a memorable dinner at the Hotel Krafft where Porter resided. A literary tour of the city helped them appreciate the immersion into European thought that Porter's months in Basel provided. In Basel, known as a city of books and home to the oldest publisher in the world, Porter first encountered Brant's work, according to her own account. Erasmus, one of Porter's favorite writers, lived his last days in Basel, and the tour included details about his life in Basel. The opportunity to travel by boat across the Rhine to dinner at the Hotel Krafft was a fitting and delightful conclusion to the *Narrenschiff/Ship of Fools* conference.

Several essays presented at the conference and other essays selected by the editor will appear

next year in *Katherine Anne Porter's Ship of Fools: Contexts and Interpretations*, published by the University of North Texas Press and edited by Thomas Austenfeld.

## 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 2008-2009 academic year, Ilya Kaminsky, Scott Anderson, Brigit Pegeen Kelly, and National Book Award winner William Vollmann gave readings at the center. In 2009-2010, the readers included William Giraldis, Justin Torres, Mihaela Mosliciuc, MacArthur "Genius" Award winner Karen Russell, and Christian Wiman. PEN Martha Albrand Award for Nonfiction winner Nick Flynn, visited in 2010-2011 as well as Kazim Ali, Kevin Brockmeier, Olga Broumas, Doug Dorst, Amelia Gray, Rachel Griffiths, and Sam Gwynne. 2011-2012 featured Tom Lux, Wells Tower, Richard Siken, James Laughlin Award winner Michael Dickman, and Louise Erdrich, who has won the National Book and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Participants in 2013-2014 included Natalie Diaz, Etgar Keret, Sergio De La Pava, Fanny Howe, and Pulitzer Prize winners, Jennifer Egan and Jorie Graham. National Book Award winner Sherman Alexie also was a Porter center reader in 2013-2014. In May 2014, Alexie was the seventh writer to win the Katherine Anne Porter Award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The reading series is supported by the generosity of the Burdine Johnson Foundation and Texas State University's English Department's Therese Kayser Lindsey endowment.

Texas State's MFA 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 is available and regularly updated on the *Front Porch* Web site. Issue 26 includes videos of KAP Literary Center appearances of Kevin Brockmeier, Olga Broumas, Cristina Garcia, and Christian Wiman.

The Writers-in-Residence at the KAP House since 2008 include Michael Noll, Katie Angermeier, Kelsey Shipman, and Jeremy Garrett. Funded by the Burdine Johnson Foundation, the Writer-in-Residence lives in the house and acts as curator of the museum. The Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center is open to visitors and school groups by appointment. To arrange a visit, e-mail [kapliterarycenter@gmail.com](mailto: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 MFA in Creative Writing can be made through the program's Web site (<http://www.english.txstate.edu/mfa/>), via email at [mfinearts@txstate.edu](mailto:mfinearts@txstate.edu), or by phone at (512) 245-7681.

## Brief, Strange Encounter with Katherine Anne Porter

By Cone Johnson, M.D.

One perfect spring day in Abilene, Texas, in 1976, I completed my early-morning hospital rounds, then walked out of the building and headed for my office, located across the street. The streets were silent, and no cars filled the office parking lot. The waiting room was empty and still. Nothing suggested the day would be unusual.

I picked up an incomplete chart tabbed "Mrs. Porter of Brownwood." The file was missing history, demographics, vital signs and a referral note. My nurse took the chart, then indicated my first patient was waiting in the exam room.

I was completely unprepared to meet a beautiful, elegantly dressed and charismatic older lady. She was diminutive, somewhat shy and quite courteous, and her voice was tinged with a Southern accent. Magnificent strands of pearls matched her hair; she wore an obviously expensive dress.

She half-jokingly asked if I could give her new lungs, then described a history of tuberculosis and severe influenza during the worldwide pandemic of 1918-1919. Lengthy treatment for bronchitis didn't really help, she said, until she stopped smoking altogether. She indicated she was not too comfortable with her previous physicians. I proffered chest x-rays and simple lung function tests, and she responded, "Maybe later."

Stultified, I thoughtlessly asked her age. She sighed deeply; her face lit up, and she noted that, if she were 40 years younger, she would give my male respiratory therapist "a run for his money!" The technician, a robust former highway patrolman, blushed, and my second faux pas was clear.

Changing the subject, I asked if she knew my aunt, U. A. Trigg, who owned an insurance agency in Brownwood, or my cousins there. She said that, as a recent arrival, she did not. Asserting her control, she then motioned for me to do an abbreviated examination.

She was alert, in no distress, and breathing very comfortably. The strap muscles in her neck were slightly active, and her thorax slightly overexpanded and very quiet. Heart tones were normal, and her arm blood pressure was normal. She was thrilled to learn that the earpiece showed her blood to be fully oxygenated.

Mrs. Porter next asked my nurse to leave, then moved to a chair opposite me and proceeded with an interrogation that began with where I was born and reared. (This ritual is very common in West Texas. She did not, however, ask about my church affiliation, a mandatory part of any such grilling in the region.)



I responded that I had been born in Eastland and reared on a farm near Denton, Texas. I served as a Navy corpsman in the Pacific in WWII, completed college at North Texas State Teacher's College, then medical school and residency at University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. This was followed by a 10-year stint in the U.S. Air Force, with additional medical training in San Antonio, Boston, Atlanta, Denver, London, and Oak Lawn Chest Hospital in Dallas.

I went on to say that, after a short stay at a large group-practice clinic and clinical faculty appointments at medical schools in Dallas and Lubbock, Texas, I finally settled into my current private practice in Abilene, which also included riding circuit to area towns within a 150-mile radius.

She nodded slightly in a way that suggested I was failing an audition. Then, she abruptly lowered her voice and asked if I planned to stay in West Texas.

Yes, I said. Folks in Sweetwater, Colorado City, Big Spring, Coleman, Burnet, Breckenridge, Stephenville, De Leon, and Comanche were very happy to see a specialist without having to leave town, and they had been very good to me. I mentioned that, if her physician in Brownwood so desired, I would be glad to see her again, but in Brownwood.

This was met with no response.

Her next inquiry was about Indian Creek. I was able to share only a vague knowledge of the area, including that my late Uncle Charlie had owned a nearby ranch on which I had hunted deer.

There was no comment.

Mrs. Porter suddenly stood, signaling an end to our conversation.

Could we call someone to pick her up?

No.

Did she want a return appointment?

No.

Was there a doctor in Brownwood to whom I should send a report?

No.

She smiled and asked if there was a bill.

I've always considered it an honor when folks seek my advice, and it was clear I had rendered no medical care to this extraordinary lady, so there was no charge.

My staff members were crestfallen and confused as she thanked them profusely for a very limited engagement.

Just as she left the office, she reached in her bag and handed my nurse three autographed copies of *Ship of Fools*. I had been out of the country or in military service when the book was published and had no knowledge of it or the subsequent film, but we all expressed genuine gratitude for this patient's unexpected generosity.

She thoroughly enjoyed the shock and surprise in our faces, then turned and disappeared. I have no idea how she got to my office or by what means she left it—if anyone picked her up or if she drove herself.

Years later, I learned that she had, indeed, nearly lost her life to influenza and had spent time at the McKnight TB Hospital at Sanatorium, Texas, near San Angelo, Texas. (Early Texas physicians stricken with TB had been treated at McKnight and, through personal experience, had garnered enough knowledge to become full-fledged lung specialists.) Following her time at McKnight, Porter had taught children of patients at Oak Lawn Hospital in Dallas.

I learned, also, about the big fofooraw that had been held in her honor in 1976 at Howard Payne University in Brownwood and the name of the physician assigned to her. Seal Cutbirth, M.D., and I distantly knew each other, and so I contacted him, but he denied making a referral.

He did, however, express considerable irritation at having to follow her around during the event. I never learned how she obtained my name, if from a friend, an acquaintance, or other source.

In contemplation, I realized the dates of her appearance at Howard Payne coincided perfectly with her visit to me. Then, and only then, it slowly dawned on me that, when Mrs. Porter came to see me, she seemed to be making the decision about where she wished to be buried.

Why she sought my counsel, I still, to this day, have no clue.

*Cone Johnson, M.D., stayed in Abilene until 2000, when he moved to Denton, Texas, but continued to ride circuit in West Texas until 2011. Today, he is in his 61st year of active medical practice and serves as a consultant at the Denton State Supported Living Center. In addition, Dr. Johnson continues in his 28th year as host of "All That Jazz," a weekly 3-hour jazz show that airs each Sunday night on KACU-FM, the NPR station in Abilene (www.kacu.org). He lives in Denton with his wife, seven elderly house cats, and assorted red foxes, coyotes and other wildlife.*

## 2009 Best New Mexico Play: Furman-Miller's *Passenger* *on the Ship of Fools*

By Christine Grogan  
University of South Florida

"The horrible thing is that it was all so damned unnecessary but it's done and can't be undone," wrote Katherine Anne Porter to her publisher Seymour Lawrence in mid-August 1961 after she completed her only novel, *Ship of Fools*. Porter's statement captures her conflicted sentiments regarding her novel, which cost her more than two decades of literary labor. After establishing herself as a master of the short story, Porter felt compelled by publishers to produce a novel. As Darlene Harbour Unrue puts it in her biography, Porter's final "push"

came at the Yankee Clipper Inn at Pigeon Cove, on Cape Ann, in Rockport, Massachusetts (249).

Not surprisingly, Laura Furman and Lynn C. Miller's *Passenger on the Ship of Fools*, a play based on the life and work of Katherine Anne Porter, is set at the Yankee Clipper Inn, Cape Ann, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1961. Weaving fact with fiction, the Furman-Miller play depicts a day in the life of Porter, with flashbacks to momentous events to document Porter's desperate struggle to complete *Ship of Fools*. The play includes passages from Porter's published prose, as well as Porter's correspondence, the interview with Barbara Thompson Davis, the Joan Givner biography, and Glenway Wescott's *Continual Lessons*.

Although the play makes liberal use of Porter's own words, the playwrights note that everything else is a product of their creativity.

A portion of the play was first performed on May 2, 2001, at the Water Club in New York City to benefit Yaddo, a place where Porter felt at home since she spent significant time in residence and served as a member of the Corporation of Yaddo. The renowned actress, Irene Worth, starred in this excerpt and was to perform the full version in April 2002. Unfortunately, Worth died a month before the April 2002-scheduled performance. Louisiana State University Professor Emerita Mary Frances HopKins took over the role. HopKins, a pioneer scholar in the field of Performance Studies, has directed and performed the work of many modern and contemporary writers. With HopKins as Porter, the Furman-Miller KAP play debuted on April 16, 2002, at the Brockett Theatre in the Winship Building on the University of Texas at Austin campus.

In addition to the April 2002 performance, there were two other productions of *Passenger on the Ship of Fools* that year. On June 27, 2002, a portion of the play took center stage at the Yaddo Summer Benefit in the Music Room in Saratoga Springs, New York. Directed by David Esbjornson and performed by Kathleen Chalfant, the May 2003 *KAP Society Newsletter* reported that "Chalfant's moving performance

was informed by brilliant insight into the deeply psychological sources of Porter's creative energy and work." On October 4, 2002, the play was performed in the HopKins Black Box Theatre at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. For the second time, Mary Frances HopKins played the role of Porter. After finding the April 2002 performance so rewarding, HopKins had asked and been granted permission to further develop the play, or as she called it a "performance in progress."

*Passenger on the Ship of Fools* enjoyed another run in the summer of 2006. From June 25 through July 9, 2006, the play was performed at the Schoolhouse Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Directed by Jeff Spencer and performed by Equity actress Judith Partelow, the play was part of the summer season of CTEK Arts. These "Evenings With" included plays about various artists, such as playwright Lillian Hellman, painter Georgia O'Keeffe, autobiographer and arts patron Mabel Dodge Luhan, theatrical director Margo Jones, and the eclectic Gertrude Stein.

Since 2006, Furman and Miller have revised the play for three actors, who play out different aspects of Porter's history and consciousness. The year 2009 saw more activity for the Furman-Miller KAP play. On February 1, 2009, a staged reading, directed by Lee Kits and with Nan Jeris, Bridget Kelly, and Ninette Mourdant, was given at the Vortex Theatre located on Central Avenue SE in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A talkback with the playwright, director, and actors followed the reading, which was free and open to the public.

From July 24 until August 9, 2009, the play was performed, under the direction of Victoria Liberatori, again at the Vortex Theatre in Albuquerque. As the winner of the 2009 best new New Mexico Play by the Vortex Theatre, *Passenger on the Ship of Fools* was billed with the following description:

"An insider's look into the fascinating, controversial and largely unknown life of Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Katherine Anne Porter. If you know her only from the famous

film based on her novel, *Ship of Fools*, this play, selected as best new New Mexican Play of 2009 by the Vortex Theatre, will bring you a world of surprise, laughter, tears and tremendous insight into the story of this major 20th century writer."

Performed on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 6 p.m., the play was followed by a talkback on Sunday, August 2, 2009.

Opening its doors in 1976, the Vortex Theatre is one of Albuquerque's premier theatres. It is a small, non-profit community theatre located across from the University of New Mexico. As a thriving member of the Albuquerque Theatre Guild, the Vortex Theatre is a venue for a range of performances from classic to contemporary, and from "local and national premieres to new interpretations of classic works."

*Passenger on the Ship of Fools* was the first collaborative work of Laura Furman and Lynn Miller. Best known for her role as series editor for the annual PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories, Furman is an award-winning novelist, short-story writer, and essayist whose work has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Mirabella*, *Yale Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Vanity Fair*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *House & Garden*. She has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Dobie-Paisano Fellowship. As a published author of five works of fiction, including *Drinking with the Cook*, and a memoir titled *Ordinary Paradise*, Furman founded *American Short Fiction*, a quarterly committed to discovering and publishing cutting-edge fiction. Although a New York City native, Furman has lived in Texas since 1978 and is Professor Emerita of English, University of Texas at Austin. In a 2001 article titled "Safety in Words: The Dangerous, Graceful Life of Laura Furman," Furman was said to be "someone who really hears others' lives."

Lynn C. Miller is a novelist and playwright, performer, and educator. Novels she has written include *The Fool's Journey* (2002) and *Death of a Department Chair* (2006). *Find Your Story, Write Your Memoir* (written with Lisa Lenard-Cook) was published in 2013. Her plays have

been produced in Austin, Tulsa, Albuquerque, Provincetown, Yaddo, and elsewhere. In 2010, Lisa Lenard-Cook and Miller founded the ABQ Writers Co-op, co-edit the literary journal *bosque (the magazine)*, and offer retreats, events, and classes for writers. Formerly Professor of Theater and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin, Miller has performed the lives of women in history and has appeared as a guest artist at many universities and art festivals.

The Furman-Miller play illustrates, despite what Porter wrote to Lawrence in August 1961, how necessary the novel really was and how it gave birth to and inspired new art forms.

## One-Woman Performance at Book Fair in New York City

Actress Pennylyn White performed her “Katherine Anne Porter: A Driving Desire” on December 7, 2008, at 20 West 44th Street, New York, NY. The performance was one of the events of the 21st Annual Small Press Book Fair. Presented by the New York Center for Independent Publishing and the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, the fair celebrated publishing’s independent spirit with public events in addition to the sale of books by more than 100 independent publishers. White’s original piece was described in the press release for December performance:

“‘I never started out with anything in this world but a kind of passion, a driving desire.’ Her flawless pen and harsh criticism of not only her times, but of human history, made Katherine Anne Porter a major voice in twentieth century American literature. When Porter left her home state of Texas for New York City, she brought with her the hard edge of a Western pioneer. It was this edge more than anything that made her name as a writer. In tribute to Porter’s life, work and legacy, actress Pennylyn White brings to life the woman behind the myth in a probing performance using extracts of Porter’s body of work, including her personal letters.”

## KAP Play at Philly Fringe Festival

By Beth Alvarez  
University of Maryland

Exclamation Theater, Inc., presented the world premiere of *Callie, Katherine, Miranda, and Others: “with tambourines and dancing”*: *Katherine Anne Porter Reminiscences about her Life and Work* at Philadelphia’s Walnut Street Theatre, September 4-7, 2008. The one-hour, one-woman play by Ellen Hendrix consists of an extended monologue by Katherine Anne Porter. The piece depicts Porter returning from the dead and visiting her Grandmother Porter’s Kyle, Texas, home as the property is being transformed into a museum and writers’ center. Discovering some of her own possessions collected there, she relives moments of her life, taking the audience into her confidence about her writing, men, politics, family and friendships, and things she had obscured during her life and career.

Directed by Exclamation Theater’s Executive Producer, Dr. Patricia Robinson-Linder, the production starred Dr. Carol Raviola. A retired vascular surgeon, Raviola is a member of the Exclamation Theater Company and a seasoned Philadelphia actress who has also appeared in numerous independent and festival films. Co-founder of Exclamation Theater, Robinson-Linder is a professional director, who, after retiring from university teaching, has begun a second career teaching in the magnet high schools of the School District of Philadelphia. The playwright, Dr. Ellen Hendrix of Baltimore, is employed as an editor for a publishing house. Her earlier work, *Upquark and Entropy*, was also produced by Exclamation Theater.

Founded in 1994, Exclamation Theater, Inc., headquartered in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, is an educational non-profit dedicated to training and educating the public for literature-in-performance. There are three companies subsumed within its structure: *Dramatis Personae*; *Rose, Thistle, Daffodil, and Harp*; and *Summer’s Day*. All are cultural, ethnic, gender, and age-diverse. Photographs and a program



from the September 6, 2008 production are available on the Katherine Anne Porter Society Web site at <http://www.kaportersociety.org/news.html>.



Carol Raviola, as Katherine Anne Porter, opens *Callie, Katherine, Miranda and Others* singing "The Yellow Rose of Texas" at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, September 6, 2008. Photograph by Rita Gaudet deVecchis.

## In Memoriam

By Darlene Unrue  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Beverly Shelton Lewoc** (1937-2009), retired professional woman and Katherine Anne Porter Room docent, died on February 10, 2009. Born in Dumas, Louisiana, she was a graduate of the University of Maryland and worked for the United States government at the Goddard Space Center for over forty years. She served as a Porter Room docent from September 1995 to December 2007. From 1995 until her death, she was a member of the Katherine Anne Porter Society. Survivors include a brother and four sisters.

**Maura (Mary Catherine) Eichner** (1915-2009), teacher and poet, was born in Brooklyn, New York. In 1933 she entered the religious order School Sisters of Notre Dame, after which her professional career evolved. For fifty years she taught in the English Department of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, where she had earned a B.A., and served for a time as English Department chair. She received an M.A.

from Catholic University of America in 1942 and the Theodore Hesburgh Award for her outstanding contribution to Catholic Higher Education in 1986. She met Porter in 1970 and became her spiritual advisor, and, along with Sister Kathleen Feeley and Father Joseph Gallagher, helped guide her to reconciliation with her Catholic faith. A well-published poet, Sister Maura and Porter also shared an appreciation for the craft of art and a disregard for poetry redolent with "thin piety" and "decoratively sweet nosegays," as Sister Maura said in a 1959 interview in the *New York Times*. Sister Maura captured images of Porter in two poems, "Try It On," published in *Four Quarters* in 1971 (a celebration of Porter's famous emerald ring), and "Visit to Katherine Anne Porter: after the stroke," published in *America* in 1980, a poignant tribute to Porter as artist and friend.

**Barbara Jean Thompson Mueenuddin Davis** (1933-2009), journalist and fiction writer, was born in Los Angeles, California, the youngest child of Fred and Mary Thompson. After earning a B.A. in English from Wellesley College in 1956, she began working for the *Washington Post* in an entry-level position and met Katherine Anne Porter after volunteering to interview her for a feature article. From that meeting a friendship evolved between the acclaimed, worldly writer and the young journalist who later described her initial role in the relationship to that of an acolyte. The friendship ripened over the years as Thompson continued to visit Porter and to interview her for another article, "Katherine Anne Porter: An Interview," which appeared in the Winter-Spring 1963 issue of the *Paris Review* and became an important source in Porter scholarship. After settling in the Washington, D.C., area, Porter often invited Thompson and her beaux for cocktails and dinner and was disappointed when Thompson married Ghulam Mueenuddin, a Pakistani diplomat, and moved to Pakistan. They corresponded and occasionally spoke by phone, and in 1963 when Porter escaped to Europe for a year after the publication of *Ship of Fools*, they met in Rome for a joyous reunion. By then Thompson Mueenuddin was the mother of a young son, Tamur, and was expecting a second

child, to whom she asked Porter to be godmother. Porter was delighted with the honor and with Daniyal, who was born a month later. The two women visited most summers during the 1960s and occasionally in the 1970s. Between visits they corresponded and exchanged gifts. Barbara and Ghulam Mueenuddin's marriage failed in the early 1970s, and they ultimately divorced. In 1980 Thompson married Edward Shippen Davis (1932-2009) and lived the remainder of her life in New York City. In addition to interviews, Davis published book reviews and fiction and twice won the Pushcart Prize. Her account of her friendship with Porter is recorded as an untitled reminiscence in *Katherine Anne Porter Remembered*, ed. Darlene Harbour Unrue (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

It was because of her long friendship with Porter that Barbara Davis agreed to assume the trusteeship of Porter's literary estate after the death in 1993 of Isabel Bayley, the first trustee. During her tenure Davis, who believed that Porter's literary estate was best protected by private persons rather than academic institutions, supported Porter scholars and theatrical adaptations of Porter's fiction, endowed the Katherine Anne Porter Prize for the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and underwrote the 2006 PEN/Katherine Anne Porter First-Amendment Award. Ultimately a serious disagreement over control of Porter's intellectual property among Davis, E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., (Porter's last attorney), and the University of Maryland (which houses the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, facilitates scholars who request access to the archive, and maintains the Katherine Anne Porter Room, filled with numerous Porter artifacts and memorabilia) came to a head. A protracted and complicated legal clash, partially recounted by Michael S. Rosenwald in "U-Md., Pulitzer winner's friends locked in messy battle over her estate, legacy," *Washington Post*, 18 November 2010, was not fully resolved until after Davis's death.

**Willene Hendrick** (1928-2010) worked as a nurse in Colorado, Texas, and Illinois after earning a B.S. at the University of Colorado at

Boulder. In the early 1960s she became an independent scholar and began to work in partnership with her husband, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign professor George Hendrick, to research, write, and edit a dozen books, including *Katherine Anne Porter* (1988), a revision of her husband's 1965 *Katherine Anne Porter*, the earliest creditable study of Porter and her fiction; *Ham Jones, Antebellum Southern Humorist* (1990); *Selected Poems of Carl Sandburg* (1996); *Fleeing for Freedom: Stories of the Underground Railroad* (2004), and *Why Not Every Man? African Americans, Civil Disobedience and the Quest for the Dream* (2005). She recounted an important segment of their 1962 research on Porter's early life in "Indian Creek: A Sketch from Memory," first published in *Katherine Anne Porter and Texas: An Uneasy Relationship*, ed. Clinton Machann and William Bedford Clark (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990).

**David Anthony Locher** (1923-2010), poet and librarian, was born in Dubuque, Iowa, and earned a B.A. at Loras College in 1947. Devoutly Catholic, he briefly attended St. Paul seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and did missionary work in the Bahamas before entering the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, to earn a master's degree in Library Science. He was librarian at the Gleeson Library at San Francisco University and then head librarian at Loras College, where he remained until his retirement. Locher met Katherine Anne Porter in 1954 at the University of Michigan, where she held a writer-in-residence post in 1954-1955. By the time he completed his degree in 1955 and enrolled in her Creative Writing course in the summer, they had become staunch friends. They corresponded for many years and shared numerous phone conversations, meeting only once more, in 1960, when he visited her in Georgetown. He published several poems in tribute to her, most notably "Summer Straw and Blue (Ann Arbor, July 1954)," in which he recaptured his impression of her the summer after their meeting. Their correspondence between 1954 and 1978 is archived in the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries. His account of their long association is recorded as

“Katherine Anne Porter,” in *Katherine Anne Porter Remembered*, ed. Darlene Harbour Unrue (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

**John Edward Hardy** (1922-2010), professor and poet, was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He earned a B.A. from Louisiana State University, an M.A. from the State University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins University. His teaching and scholarly career spanned six decades and comprised positions at a number of universities, including Yale, Notre Dame, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he spent twenty years and served as head of the English Department for five years. Father of six daughters, he was married twice, first to Marie Elam, with whom he remained friends, and then to Willene Schaefer, to whom he was married for forty-one years. He published a book of poetry, *Certain Poems* (1958), and numerous articles and books on modern English and American literature. He met Katherine Anne Porter at LSU when he was a freshman and she was living in Baton Rouge with her fifth and last husband, Albert Russel Erskine, Jr. They saw one another on only one other occasion, two decades before he published one of the early critical books on her fiction, *Katherine Anne Porter* (1973), which she admired. His account of their meetings is recorded as “Remembering KAP,” in *Katherine Anne Porter Remembered*, ed. Darlene Harbour Unrue (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

**Harrison Paul Porter, Jr.**, (1921-2012) was born in Houston, Texas, the second of four children of Constance Eve Ingalls Porter and Harrison Paul Porter, Sr., Katherine Anne Porter’s brother, who in his youth informally changed his name from Harry Ray Porter, his birth name, to Harrison Paul Porter. Both father and son were called “Paul.”

Young Paul graduated from John H. Reagan High School in Houston in 1939, served in the Army during World War II, and afterward attended the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he majored in general studies and wrote arts reviews and political columns for the *Daily Bruin*, the student

newspaper. After working for the Southern Pacific Railroad in Houston as a claims adjuster, he joined the Muss-Tankoos Corporation in New York City in 1960 as an executive assistant to the Chairman of the Board. Retiring in 1987, he lived in Austin until 1997, when he returned to Houston, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Paul was a sixteen-year-old high school student in 1937 when he met his aunt Katherine Anne, who had come to Houston for a brief sojourn within her family circle while she was in the process of divorcing her fourth husband, Eugene Pressly, and preparing to marry her fifth and last husband, Albert

Russel Erskine, Jr. A sensitive youth who was starved for artistic stimulation, he delighted in his aunt’s worldliness, fashionable dress, success as an author, and wealth of knowledge. She, in turn, recognized him as a kindred spirit, and she decided to take him under her wing. They quickly became devoted to one another. After she returned to Louisiana to marry Erskine, she and her nephew began a correspondence that lasted nearly four decades. They talked on the phone frequently, attended concerts and plays together, and endlessly discussed writing, painting, and music. A selection of her letters to him was published in *Mademoiselle* in April 1966 as “Letters to a Nephew: Observations on—Pets, Poets, Sex, Love, Hate, Fame, Treason.”

By 1970 Paul had taken on substantial responsibility for his aunt and her financial,



Katherine Anne Porter and her nephew Paul Porter, circa 1946-1947, Santa Monica, California, Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

legal, and literary dealings. He became her legal guardian in 1977 when she became incapable of managing her own business affairs and had developed a sporadic paranoia, turning against some of the persons to whom she had been closest, including him. When she died at the Carriage Hill Nursing Center in Silver Spring, Maryland, he carried out her long expressed wishes, wrote her epitaph (“In my end is my beginning”), and with two young relatives and a priest, oversaw her burial near her mother’s grave in the cemetery at Indian Creek, Texas, her birthplace. He was made a member of the Maryland Society and the Founders Society at the University of Maryland, College Park, in recognition of his donations of books, memorabilia, photographs, and papers to the archives and the Katherine Anne Porter Room and of the endowment he established for support of the University of Maryland Libraries’ holdings of material related to his aunt. He was generous with time and support in helping scholars involved in reconstructing Katherine Anne Porter’s life and interpreting her fiction, and he himself contributed to her biographical portrait with numerous talks and published pieces, the most substantial of which is “Remembering Aunt Katherine,” published first in *Katherine Anne Porter and Texas: An Uneasy Relationship*, ed. Clinton Machann and William Bedford Clark (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990).

**John A. Prince** (1922-2012), college English teacher, caterer, and real estate broker, was born in Norfolk, Virginia. He earned a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.A. from the University of Missouri. After serving in the Army Paratroopers during World War II, he taught English for several years before pursuing another of his passions, the culinary arts, by going to Paris for a course of study at the Cordon Bleu. Encouraged by his friends Caroline Gordon and Allen Tate to settle in Washington, D.C., in the 1950s, he began work as a caterer, married Catherine Graves, and met Katherine Anne Porter. A warm friendship developed between Porter and the Princes that deepened when she moved to Georgetown in 1959. With a mutual interest in cooking, Porter and the Princes shared many dinners and social

events, and the couple provided her with various kinds of help and offered advice on business matters. After Porter decided to settle permanently in the Washington, D.C., area in 1963, the friendship ended when she reneged on a real estate transaction Prince had brokered with considerable difficulty and financial loss. The Princes’ Papers at the University of Maryland, College Park, Libraries include correspondence, photographs, financial records, legal documents, and books relating to their association with Porter. Prince’s account of the friendship and its failure was published as an untitled reminiscence in *Katherine Anne Porter Remembered*, ed. Darlene Harbour Unrue (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

**William Raymond (Bill) Wilkins** (1928-2013) was born in Loveland, Colorado, the youngest of four children of Raymond and Violet Wilkins. He graduated from Humboldt State College in Arcata, California, in 1951, and in 1952 he joined the Navy and married his college sweetheart, Fern Stahl (1927-2008), with whom he had two children, Robin and David (1954-1968). During his military career Wilkins reached the rank of Lieutenant Commander and served in various posts before assuming positions at the National Security Agency headquarters in Maryland, from which he retired in 1974. Bill met Katherine Anne Porter in 1968 when Fern’s cousin, Robert Beach, a member of the University of Maryland’s University Relations staff, was driving the family home after the Arlington National Cemetery burial of the Wilkinses’ fourteen-year-old son, David, and decided to stop at Porter’s house in Washington, D.C., to drop off some papers. A sympathetic Porter insisted that the family come in and stay for lunch, and from that meeting a close friendship developed. When Wilkins, bored with retirement, heard that Porter was looking for an assistant to help her organize her literary affairs, he offered his services. Working with her for little more than a year, Wilkins helped her pull together the disparate drafts of *The Never-Ending Wrong* (1977) and worked with her on her unfinished biography of Cotton Mather. When her disorientation and paranoia that followed major strokes in 1977 convinced him



he could no longer be of service to her, he withdrew from her employment, remaining loyal to her and her memory as long as he lived. In succeeding years Wilkins worked for the Assistant Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind in Baltimore, Maryland, and from 1996 until 2003 he volunteered his help at the Special Collections in the University of Maryland, College Park, Libraries, which includes the Papers of Katherine Anne Porter.

### ALA Session Call For Papers

The Katherine Anne Porter Society Session at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual American Literature Association conference will be chaired by Darlene Unrue. The topic for the session will be “Katherine Anne Porter in Her Time.” Please send proposals of 250 words or less to Professor Unrue at [darleneunrue@gmail.com](mailto:darleneunrue@gmail.com) or 3431 Iberia Street, Las Vegas, NV, 89146. The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2014.

The society encourages submissions by newcomers and by established scholars of all ranks. Reading time for papers should be no more than twenty minutes. According to the rules established by the American Literature Association, no one may present more than one paper at an ALA conference; individuals may, however, present a paper on one panel and chair other panels, and/or also present on round-table discussions. With the proposal, please include e-mail address, mailing address, and phone numbers. Also specify if you will require a projector for a powerpoint or dvd presentation and screen.

The conference will be held at the Westin Copley Place, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, May 27-30, 2015. Details of the conference and information about hotel reservations will appear on the Web site of the American Literature Association ([www.americanliterature.org](http://www.americanliterature.org)).

## The Years' Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2008-2013

By Heather Fox and Christine Grogan  
University of South Florida

In 1997, in the newsletter's third volume, Janis Stout initiated “The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter,” which she envisioned would be an annual feature of the newsletter. Christine Hait continued this tradition from volumes five through fourteen. We're excited to be reviving this important section of the newsletter.

To compile this bibliography, which annotates scholarship on Porter from 2008 (when the newsletter was last published) to 2013, we searched the *MLA International Bibliography* and *Academic Search Premier*, using the term “Porter, Katherine Anne.” To find dissertations, we searched *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses A&I*, using the term “Porter, Katherine Anne” and limiting the search to “abstract.” We drew our annotations for dissertations from the abstracts; we did not obtain and read the complete dissertations. We did not include material that contained only passing reference of Porter, and our annotations summarize instead of evaluate.

Please send information on any additions that need to be made to this bibliography to Christine Grogan at [cgrogan@mail.usf.edu](mailto:cgrogan@mail.usf.edu) so that I may include the information in next year's newsletter.

### The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2013

#### Books

Janis Stout's *South by Southwest: Katherine Anne Porter and the Burden of Texas History* (University of Alabama Press, 2013) chronicles Porter's Texas origins and travels within the southwestern United States and Mexico. Stout positions texts—from *The Old Order* stories to *Ship of Fools*—in their relations to place,

contextually binding Porter's biography to her fiction.

### Chapters in Books

Patsy J. Daniels's chapter, "Deconstructing Katherine Anne Porter: 'Strange Fruit' in 'The Fig Tree,'" in her book *Constructing the Literary Self: Race and Gender in Twentieth-Century Literature* (Cambridge Scholars, 2013), argues that "The Fig Tree" is a social protest narrative and that the fig tree and its fruit represent a lynching tree, indicative of the story's setting during the Jim Crow South.

### Articles

In "American Uncles and Aunts: Generations, Genealogies, Bildungs in 1930s Novels," *Altre Modernità* 9 (2013): 158-183, Cinzia Scarpino argues that 1930s American novels reveal "a more inclusive past, a narrative heritage capable of encompassing larger genealogies," as illustrated in Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Pietro Di Donato's *Christ in Concrete*, Josephine Herbst's *Pity is Not Enough*, and Porter's *Old Mortality*. Part of a larger project, Scarpino's article examines the presence of uncles and aunts in these texts as both reflective of American culture in the 1930s and significant for their inclusive influence on familial identity formation.

Laurel Bollinger's article, "Trauma, Influenza, and Revelation in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Pale Horse, Pale Rider,'" *Papers on Language and Literature* 49.4 (2013): 364-389, argues that it is important to look beyond the autobiographical connections to Porter in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* and to examine the text as a modernist response. She notes that Porter is the only modern author to provide a "sustained examination" of the Spanish Influenza of 1918 and asserts that she uses the apocalyptic genre to shape her experience.

### Notes

In "Ostracism and the Guilty Conscience: A Comparison of Guy De Maupassant's 'A Piece of String' and Katherine Anne Porter's 'Noon Wine,'" *ANQ—A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles Notes and Reviews* 26.4 (Oct. 2013): 254-260, Sara Deutch Schotland makes a case

for discussing Maupassant's influence on Porter, arguing that Porter had Maupassant's Hauchecorne in mind when she crafted "Noon Wine's" Royal Thompson. She also notes the structural similarities between both stories and briefly discusses the animal imagery.

### The Year's Work on

#### Katherine Anne Porter: 2012

### Books

Darlene Harbour Unrue's edited volume, *Selected Letters of Katherine Anne Porter: Chronicles of a Modern Woman* (University Press of Mississippi, 2012), transcribes and chronicles Porter's correspondence from 1916-1979, including correspondence not previously published in Isabel Bayley's *Letters of Katherine Anne Porter* (1990). The volume includes a chronology of Porter's life, an introduction by Unrue, and a list of recipients, which identifies relevant time periods and the context of their relationships to Porter.

### Chapters/Essays in Books

Seamus O'Malley's "America's Ford: Glenway Wescott, Katherine Anne Porter and Knopf's *Parade's End*," from *Ford Madox Ford and America* (Rodopi, 2012), credits Porter for being one of the American writers who helped maintain Ford's posthumous legacy. A champion of Porter all his life, Ford wrote that Porter was "the finest prose writer bar none in the USA, and one of the most amusing women." Porter, however, found Ford's importance not so much in how great his books were but how diligently he worked at them. This essay also discusses Wescott's relationship with Ford and the risk Knopf took publishing Ford's 800-page novel, *Parade's End*.

In "The Transatlantic Voyage and Transnational Transformations: Interpreting the Meanings of 'Germanness' on a *Ship of Fools*," from *Transnational American Studies* (Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012), Anne-Marie Scholz discusses Stanley Kramer's 1965 adaptation of Porter's *Ship of Fools*, showing that the changes he made to transform the text for a broader audience ultimately failed. Western Germans criticized it for relying on German

stereotypes and faulty history, and Eastern Germans, who were more accepting, found its focus on the personal done at the expense of the political.

Jay Watson includes a chapter on the Miranda stories, called “Difficult Embodiment: Coming of Age in Katherine Anne Porter’s Miranda’s Stories,” in his book *Reading for the Body: The Recalcitrant Materiality of Southern Fiction, 1893-1985* (University of Georgia Press, 2012). In his reading of *The Old Order, Old Mortality*, and *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, Watson examines the relationship of the old order ideology on a developing woman’s body and defines this relationship in terms of its numerous “embodied experiences,” which, like illness narratives discussed in other chapters of the book, contribute to (southern) female identity formation and constructs.

### Articles

In “On the Touristic Stage of the 1920s and 30s Mexico: Katherine Anne Porter and a Modernist Tradition of Women Travel Writers,” *Women’s Studies: An Inter-disciplinary Journal* 41 (2012): 413-435, Juanita Cabello contextualizes Porter’s depictions of Mexico in stories, such as “Flowering Judas” and “Hacienda,” as representative of both U.S. touristic and modernist women travel writing. She points out the relationship between women’s changing mobility and the possibility of a “more fluid” identity for them in the twentieth century, asserting that the woman traveler was “particularly suited to render visible Mexico’s cultural excitement and explosive unruliness” after the Mexican Revolution because “she was a spectacle herself.”

### Dissertations

2012 was a big year for dissertations on Porter as six were completed.

Karen Svendsen explores how medieval, renaissance, and modernist art influences Porter’s works in “Art and Artistry in Katherine Anne Porter: Iconographic Figures and Festive Patterns” (Baylor University). Examining *Noon Wine*, “María Concepción,” and “The Cracked Looking-Glass,” Svendsen argues that “Porter

evokes the life-death-rebirth cycle of festive patterns, also called folk carnival humor by Mikhail Bakhtin, to convey hope for people and the continuation of their culture during times of turmoil.”

Alison Arant’s “‘That Rotten Richness’: Old Maids and Reproductive Anxiety in U.S. Southern Fiction, 1923-1946” (University of South Carolina) discusses works by Porter, Ellen Glasgow, William Faulkner, and Richard Wright to argue that the figure of the old maid embodies “modern southern ambivalence”: “these writers use her to reject the myths of the glorious past and mourn for the region’s losses, satirize the burden of Southern history and fall prey to its allure, and resuscitate and undercut the South’s ideological frameworks.”

Kellie D. Warren’s “Pan-American Modernism” (Tulane University) proposes a more expansive definition of modernism—one that accounts for North-South axis within the Americas in addition to the conventional East-West axis. Focusing on twentieth-century writers who had significant ties to Latin America—James Weldon Johnson, John Dos Passos, Porter, and Waldo Frank—Warren argues that their writings reveal the opportunism, “imperialist designs,” and “racist assumptions” underlying U.S. relations with Latin America.

Reading Ernest Hemingway, Willa Cather, Porter, John Dos Passos, and José Juan Tablada from a transnational perspective, Aram Shepherd’s “The Contours of America: Latin America and the Borders of Modernist Literature in the United States” (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) examines how these modernist writers use representations of Latin America to support constructions of the United States as “America.” Shepherd claims that, although these writers recognized the transnational possibilities between Latin America and the U.S., they “sought to limit the influence of such cultural connections.”

In “‘The Queen of the Household’: Mothers, ‘Other’ Mothers, and Female Genealogy on the Plantation in Postslavery Women’s Fiction” (University of Mississippi), Correna Catlett

Merricks provides a feminist reading of Kate Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" and "La Belle Zoraïde," Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*, Eudora Welty's *Delta Wedding*, and Porter's *The Old Order* to illustrate how these texts privilege female characters' voices over those of males. Furthermore, she argues that these works focus on female genealogy and in doing so show how women, specifically mothers, manipulate power on the postslavery plantation.

Tabitha A. Morgan's "A 'living art': Working-Class, Transcultural, and Feminist Aesthetics in the United States, Mexico, and Algeria, 1930s" (University of Massachusetts Amherst) explores the cultural productions of Porter, Anita Brenner, Tina Modotti, Maria Izquierdo, and Juanita Guccione. She examines how these five women "negotiated political conceptions of nationhood, artistic genres such as realism and modernism, and then created their own feminist transcultural and working-class aesthetics to counter otherwise limited conceptions of individual agency."

### **The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2011**

#### **Chapters/Essays/Entries in Books**

In his latest collection of essays, *Life Sentences: Literary Judgments and Accounts* (Knopf, 2011), William H. Gass includes his thoughts on "Katherine Anne Porter's fictional self" in which he notes that although Porter's fiction is "notably lucid," her "life history is a biographer's nightmare, full of false connections and alleged events." After venturing into biography anyway, Gass concludes that the painstaking care she took with her prose did not carry over into her personal life, especially when it came to marriage. In praising Porter's style, Gass says that although she knew what it was to be poor, "her much admired style bore every mark of the aristocracy."

A companion piece to *A Jury of Her Peers: Celebrating American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx*, Elaine

Showalter's edition, *The Vintage Book of American Women Writers* (Vintage, 2011), reproduces stories, essays, and poems by American women writers from the last 400 years who have shaped literary history. Included in this collection is Porter's "The Circus," which Showalter writes has "dramatized the images of freaks and femininity that had been essential to much of American women's writing since the nineteenth century."

#### **Articles**

In "Modernism and the Persistence of Romance," *Journal of Modern Literature* 34.4 (2011): 48-62, Katie Owens-Murphy argues that Willa Cather's *My Mortal Enemy* and Porter's *Old Mortality* point to something that has been overlooked by many scholars—modernism's ambivalent relationship to romance. Both works use and misuse, revisit and reformulate the conventions of romance. Owens-Murphy rereads the final line of *Old Mortality* to challenge critics who have overemphasized Miranda's "ignorance," stating that they have underestimated Miranda's "hopefulness." For this reason, she claims that romance prevails at the novella's end.

Two articles published this year discuss *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider* in the context of the influenza of 1918. Caroline Hovanec's "Of Bodies, Families, and Communities: Refiguring the 1918 Influenza Pandemic," *Literature and Medicine* 29.1 (2011): 161-181, explores *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider*, along with William Maxwell's novel *They Came Like Swallows* and John O'Hara's short story "The Doctor's Son," to discuss representations of the Spanish flu. She looks at how these three major American writers provide insight into the flu virus's impact on the individual, the family, and the community and how the flu "acts as metaphor for the dehumanizing and denaturalizing aspects of modern life."

The second of these, David Davis's "The Forgotten Apocalypse: Katherine Anne Porter's 'Pale Horse, Pale Rider,' Traumatic Memory, and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918," *Southern Literary Journal* 43.2 (2011): 55-74, identifies *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider* as a historiography and

connects trauma studies to the depicted relationship between individual and collective memory. Davis argues that the story “acts as a site of memory” by its depiction of Miranda’s memory as a survivor of the Influenza Pandemic of 1918.

In “The Harm of ‘Swedening’: Anxieties of Nativism in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Noon Wine,’” *Southern Literary Journal* 43.2 (2011): 75-86, David Yost explores the themes of nationalism and nativism in “Noon Wine,” “showing how easily nativist arguments can be turned on their adherents,” as they do with Thompson and Hatch. By showcasing the prejudices of Thompson regarding the Swedish Helton and then Hatch with both Thompson and Helton, Porter exposes the hypocrisies of nativist reasoning and the violence it creates.

Disputing Porter’s contention that Cather was no modernist, Janis Stout’s “‘The Nude Had Descended the Staircase’: Katherine Anne Porter Looks at Willa Cather Looking at Modern Art,” *Cather Studies* 9 (2011): 225-243, revisits Cather’s “eclectic”—not “regressive”—tastes. Stout responds to Porter’s essay “Reflections on Willa Cather” by setting the records straight about Cather’s interest in modern art and her place in modernism.

Leigh Johnson’s “Foreign Incursions: Stephen Crane and Katherine Anne Porter’s Tourist Violence in Mexico,” *Journal of Postcolonial Cultures and Societies* 2.1-2 (2011): 37-56, examines Crane’s “The Five White Mice” and Porter’s “That Tree,” arguing they show attitudes of entitlement by American tourists to Mexico, which create what Johnson calls “domestic violence” and instability. Johnson notes the irony that even though both artists reveal the injustices done to the Mexican people, they nonetheless contribute to it by bringing colonial violence to those they write about.

Susan Lohafer’s creative essay titled “In the Bullring,” *Iowa Review* 41.1 (2011): 63-71, compares her experience watching a bullfight in Madrid with Porter’s experience described in her 1955 essay “St. Augustine and the Bullfight.”

## Dissertations

In “Writing Insurrection: US Literature and the Politics of Latin American Intervention, 1898 to 2010” (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Kimberly L. O’Neill challenges critics who read twentieth-century Latin American narratives as reinforcing Latin brutality and thereby justifying U.S. imperialism. Instead, as O’Neill claims, these narratives “undermine state power, contest military intervention,” and “urge American readers to intercede for hemispheric human rights.” Her first chapter demonstrates how journalists and literary writers—including Porter—use their power to support rebellion among Latin Americans and discourage armed interventionism.

## The Year’s Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2010

### Books

While researching for her 2005 biography, Darlene Unrue states that she learned not only “the importance of public documents,” but also “the special value of eyewitness accounts—reminiscences.” Unrue’s book, *Katherine Anne Porter Remembered* (University of Alabama Press, 2010), brings together 63 reminiscences by 52 authors, 25 of which had never been published. They range from one paragraph to many pages, from praises to criticism, in an effort to capture “a composite portrait of Porter.”

### Chapters/Essays/Entries in Books

Ruth M. Alvarez’s chapter, “Katherine Anne Porter,” in *A Companion to the American Short Story*, edited by Alfred Bendixen and James Nagel (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), examines 17 stories set in Mexico and the South, including publication histories and the significance of the settings and events, as they relate to Porter’s life experiences.

Regretting he did not go to college, Charles Schulz enrolled in a course at Santa Rosa Junior College in the spring of 1965. M. Thomas Inge reproduces the A paper he wrote for the course in his book, *My Life with Charlie Brown* (University Press of Mississippi, 2010). The essay, which the professor said was the “perfect



example of what a paper should be,” discussed the five dreams in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*.

In Gary M. Ciuba’s chapter, “Given Only Me for Model: Porter’s Miranda’ Stories and the Dilemmas of Mimetic Desire,” from his book, *Desire, Violence, and Divinity in Modern Southern Fiction: Katherine Anne Porter, Flannery O’Connor, Cormac McCarthy, Walker Percy* (Louisiana State University Press, 2010), he examines mimeticism in the Miranda stories in Porter’s life, arguing that Porter desires to encompass models of southern womanhood while simultaneously “rejecting” and “demythiz[ing]” those same models in her fiction. He chronicles Miranda’s models of southern femininity in *The Old Order* stories, suggests that some of Miranda’s models in *Old Mortality* are “so outlandish that they patently point beyond themselves to what they mediate,” and asserts that mimeticism is present in both models of patriotism and Miranda’s connection to Adam in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*.

#### Articles

In “Letters of Understanding: James Still’s Correspondence with Marjorie Rawlings and Katherine Anne Porter, 1936-1945,” *Appalachian Heritage* 38.4 (2010): 53-62, Carol Boggess reflects on correspondence between Still and Rawlings and Still and Porter. After meeting Porter at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, NY, in 1940, Still maintained a professional and personal relationship with Porter, who was sixteen years older and who wrote him a reference for a Guggenheim Fellowship, which he was awarded. Boggess notes that Still thought highly of Porter’s work, stating in a letter that praised her genius for two of her early stories: “Only K.A.P could have written them.”

In “The Mexican Revolution in the Eyes of Katherine Anne Porter and Nellie Campobello,” *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 66.3 (2010): 99-122, Emron Esplin reads Porter’s “Flowering Judas” alongside Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho* to show how their fictional portrayals of the Mexican revolution diverge. However, as Emron notes, in life the authors sympathized with the revolutionary leaders. He accounts for this

discrepancy by discussing their works from a hemispheric approach, arguing that despite the proximity of Mexico and Texas, the two writers were separated by national and linguistic borders. His article includes discussion on the writers’ truth-claims, the depictions of Pancho Villa versus Braggioni, and the Christian imagery and violence.

Joan Givner’s “A Family Affair,” *Sewanee Review* 118.3 (2010): 435-442, commemorates the death of her daughter, Emily, whose writing was profoundly influenced by Porter. Givner meditates on her daughter’s reluctance to publish during her lifetime and the heightened sense of mortality characterizing Emily’s work, which leads Givner to thoughts on Porter, who nearly died from influenza. She concludes: “Now I think that what gives the special quality to Porter’s work is the intensity of her sense of loss, expressed with an elegiac lyricism in many of her stories.”

#### The Year’s Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2009

##### Chapter/Essays/Entries in Books

Robert H. Brinkmeyer’s chapter, “Something Deadly in the Air: Katherine Anne Porter,” in his book *The Fourth Ghost: White Southern Writers and European Fascism, 1930-1950* (Louisiana State University Press, 2009) examines the connections between Porter’s time in Germany and her work. He asserts that her experiences in Berlin brought her antiauthoritarian feelings to the surface and, when linked to memories of her childhood in the American South, produced work that “interrogates” power and oppression. Brinkmeyer analyzes the Miranda stories in terms of this shift and concludes that *Ship of Fools* represents the culmination of Porter’s “cruel and damning vision” of humanity, which began in Berlin.

Michael P. Bibler examines the “half of a matriarch” relationship between Nannie and Grandmother in *The Old Order* stories as part of his chapter, “Katherine Anne Porter, Margaret Walker, and the Uncomfortable Compromise of Black Women’s Autonomy,” in *Cotton’s Queer*

*Relations: Same-Sex Intimacy and the Literature of Southern Plantation, 1936-1968* (University of Virginia Press, 2009). He argues that their intimacy and power was remarkable for the historical time and that, even though their emotional bond cannot be read as exclusively homosexual, the intensity of their mutual affection “makes it impossible to deny the presence of something queer.”

In “A Coming of Death Story: Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘The Jilting of Granny Weatherall,’” in *Death and Dying* (Ed. Harold Bloom, Infobase Publishing, 2009), John McClain examines portrayals of death in “The Grave,” “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall,” “Hacienda,” and “Holiday.” He argues that Porter’s writings on death “run around and around” like Granny Weatherall’s thoughts and reveal Porter’s “problematic” religious faith.

Marshall Gregory devotes a chapter of his book *Shaped by Stories: The Ethical Power of Narratives* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2009) to discussing the ethical dimensions of “The Grave.” After reproducing the full text of Porter’s story, his chapter titled “Ethics of Narrative in a Practical Vein: Ethical Invitations in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘The Grave,’” argues that the story invites—even hooks—its readers to participate in Miranda’s realizations about mortality.

## Articles

*Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* published five articles on Porter in its Winter 2009 edition (62.1-2).

Unearthing one of the children’s stories Porter probably didn’t want found, Darlene Unrue’s “A Newly Discovered Children’s Story by Katherine Anne Porter: Foretelling the Mature Canon,” *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 62.1-2 (2009): 181-194, reproduces the full text of “How Baby Talked to the Fairies.” Unrue credits it as a crafted tale for young children and also a forerunner for her later fiction, as it anticipates many of Porter’s themes and even characters. She ends her article by encouraging scholars to gather and study the body of children’s stories Porter wrote between

1916 and 1918, which Unrue calls “the darkest corner of her apprenticeship.”

In “The Spinnet and the Coffin: Katherine Anne Porter and the Art of Music,” *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 62.1-2 (2009): 195-212, Thomas Austenfeld points out that had Porter published *Ship of Fools* thirty years earlier, it would have been celebrated as a modernist masterpiece. Instead, he notes, she turned her attention to music. His article examines how music and death figure prominently in Porter’s oeuvre. Interestingly, Porter preferred more traditional music, “grounded in nineteenth-century tonality,” to modernist innovations.

Jewel Spears Brooker examines the creative underpinnings of *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* in “Nightmare and Apocalypse in Katherine Anne Porter’s *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*,” *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 62.1-2 (2009): 213-234. Specifically, she discusses how Porter patterned her work after Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, incorporated Dürer’s engravings of the grim Knight, and depended on the Bible and Dürer’s *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Ultimately, Porter employs these biblical and medieval archetypes to “manipulate parallels between past and present and between individual consciousness and historical forces.” She concludes by praising Porter’s work as a triumph of literary modernism.

Cheryl D. Coleman’s “‘No Memory Is Really Faithful’: Memory and Myth in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Old Mortality,’” *Mississippi Quarterly* 62.1-2 (2009): 235-246, argues that the Gay family creates a mythologized representation of the past in order to subvert actual memory. Coleman asserts that Miranda, at the end of *Old Mortality*, begins the process of uncovering the truth within “embellishing” and “willful forgetting of details” in order to reconstruct her identity in and outside familial memory.

Sarah Robertson’s “Accessing Blood-Knowledge in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘The Grave,’” *Mississippi Quarterly* 62.1-2 (2009): 247-264, examines the representation of “blood-

knowledge” in *The Old Order* and *Old Mortality* as an inheritance which leaves out the implications of “racial guilt” in developing the Gay family’s legends. Robertson argues that, despite attempting to idealize the past by concealing or glossing over connections to slavery, the underlying issues of culpability eventually come to the surface.

Challenging critics who interpret *Ship of Fools* as purely pessimistic, Lisa Roney revisits Porter’s novel to uncover its anti-eugenic themes and to argue that Porter sets up sympathetic parallels between Jews, the sick, and disabled. Her article, “Katherine Anne Porter’s *Ship of Fools*: An Interrogation of Eugenics,” *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 45.1 (2009): 82-107, reengages the comparison between Porter’s novel and Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*, noting that in addition to being “novels of ideas,” “there also are remarkable similarities between life in a sanatorium and life on an ocean liner.” It also explains why Porter was not forthright about her own bout with tuberculosis.

Parish Conkling’s “The Triadic Nature of Women in Katherine Anne Porter’s Fiction,” *Journal of The American Studies Association of Texas* 40 (2009): 43-52, asserts that Porter’s female characters either “embrace,” resist, or are “caught in the middle” of “assigned gender roles.” In particular, Conkling analyzes Grandmother/Sophia Jane in “The Journey,” Mother Mueller in “Holiday,” Miranda in “The Grave” and “The Circus,” Cousin Amy in *Old Mortality*, and the title character in “María Concepción.” Conkling associates these characters in Porter’s fiction as indicative of the matriarch, the New Woman, or the woman who exists between categories. Conkling argues that, when combined, these three categories represent one feminine voice.

In “Overwhelming the Medium: Fiction and the Trauma of Pandemic Influenza in 1918,” *Literature and Medicine* 28.1 (2009): 55-81, Catherine Belling points out that stories of the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic were overshadowed by stories of WWI. She claims

that studying the literary representations, however scant, says more about the limits of representation than about the pandemic itself. Devoting a section of her article to Porter’s *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, Belling praises Porter’s work for being the only first-hand literary account we have of a single patient’s experience with the flu of 1918 and for what it tells us about the disease’s assault on consciousness, memory, and the medium of language itself.

Searching for direct accounts of illness as a social historian of medicine, Mark Honigsbaum finds similarities between *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* and John Donne’s accounts of his illness in *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions and Severall [sic] Steps in My Sickness*. In “The Patient’s View: John Donne and Katharine [sic] Anne Porter,” *Lancet* 374 (2009): 194-195, Honigsbaum argues that Porter’s depiction of her experience with the pandemic is important because it demonstrates the lasting influence of the disease through her memory of it; it “captures the peculiar phenomenon of the cyanotic end-stages” of the pandemic; and it reminds us that it is reductive to examine only the biological effects of disease, “los[ing] sight of what it means to be human.”

## **The Year’s Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2008**

### **Books**

Darlene Harbour Unrue’s edited volume of *Collected Stories and Other Writings* (Library of America, 2008), includes Porter’s preface “Go Little Book” and twenty-six stories, as compiled in their final collections of *Flowering Judas and Other Stories*, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories*, as well as a section of “Essays, Reviews, and Other Writings.”

### **Chapters/Essays/Entries in Books**

In her chapter, “Reflections on the Joys of Archival Scholarship; Or, When Is a Biography Not a Biography?” from *Willa Cather: New Facts, New Glimpses, Revisions* (Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2008), Janis Stout discusses her experience with biographical scholarship with her books, *Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of*

*the Times* (1995) and *Willa Cather: The Writer and Her World* (2000), including methodology and the “perils” of biographical writing.

Melanie R. Benson’s chapter, “The Measures of Love: Southern Belles and Working Girls in Frances Newman, Anita Loos, and Katherine Anne Porter,” in her book *Disturbing Calculations: The Economics of Identity in Postcolonial Southern Literature, 1912-2002* (University of Georgia Press, 2008), argues that these authors’ protagonists all “attempt without success to subvert the traditional, cloistering narratives of marriage and sex.” Benson asserts this is a distinctly southern characteristic and the failed attempt often results in loss instead of identity restoration. In particular, she examines “Theft,” *Old Mortality*, and *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, pointing out that, even though Porter’s women attempt to leave the South physically and psychologically, they remain “anchored to it.”

In his essay titled “Writing Rhetorics, Reading Narrative,” included in *The River Is a Strong Brown God’: Iconic Places and Characters in 20th Century American Cultures* (St. Cloud State University, 2008), Matt Wanat applies principles learned from Jim Phelan’s essay “Narrative as Rhetoric: Reading the Spells of Porter’s ‘Magic’” to his teaching of Jack Schaefer’s 1949 western *Shane*. He encourages composition teachers to incorporate literature in their classrooms and to discuss the work’s rhetorical strategies, including separating the text’s narrators from the implied author.

The following two essays on Porter were published in *Scribbling Women & the Short Story Form: Approaches by American & British Women Writers* (Peter Lang, 2008).

In “Laura’s Unconscious Rejection of the Short Story in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Flowering Judas,’” Susana M. Jiménez-Placer argues that Laura understands the ambiguity of language as a chaotic consequence of human evil. As such,

she attempts—unsuccessfully—to reduce language to an orderly, rigid system. The narrator, on the other hand, exploits language’s flexibility, abounding in images and symbols. Jiménez-Placer concludes that Laura’s final “no” contains a contradiction (being both a negation and a reaffirmation) and readers would be following in Laura’s misguided footsteps if we try to pin down fixed meaning.

Rachel Lister’s essay, “‘Beyond Human Reach’: Silence and Contiguity in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Holiday’ and ‘He,’” examines the function of silence in “He” and “Holiday.” She argues that Porter’s use of silence exploits the short story genre, positioning the reader as co-creator of the text.

### Articles

Sari Edelstein’s “‘Pretty as Pictures’: Family Photography and Southern Postmemory in Porter’s *Old Mortality*,” *Southern Literary Journal* 40.2 (2008): 151-165, begins by comparing William Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* to *Old Mortality* in terms of postmemory’s effects on its characters. Edelstein argues that, in *Old Mortality*, southern regional identity is “bound up in remembering and forgetting certain aspects of the past” and that this confinement, revealed in part through photographs and legends, positions the past in the present as a representative construct which idealizes collective memory.

In “Intensities of Consciousness Delusion, Dream, and Delirium in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* and Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Pale Horse, Pale Rider,’” B.A.S.: *British and American Studies/Revista De Studii Britanice Şi Americane* 14 (2008): 181-192, Claire Crabtree-Sinnett argues that Porter’s *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* serves as a companion piece for Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. She compares the two works’ critique of patriarchy, depiction of WWI, and continuum of consciousness, concluding that the binaries of sanity and madness are blurred in both texts.