



2001 Mary Gordon

Chaste Lyricism: Reflections on the Works of Willa Cather, Katherine Anne Porter, Jean Stafford and Eudora Welty

Mary Catherine Gordon (born December 8, 1949) is an American writer and is the McIntosh Professor of English at Barnard College. She is best known for her novels, memoirs and literary criticism. She received her A.B. from Barnard College in 1971, and her M.A. from Syracuse University in 1973. An American novelist, Gordon is often classified as a writer who conflates the concerns of feminism and Catholicism, but since her first novel, *Final Payments* (1978), which deals with a young woman's mourning for her father, she has proved to be a writer in the modern mainstream of American fiction, who combines domestic realism, satire, parody, and lyrical observation in her well-planned novels. *The Company of Women* (1981), a story set in a fashionable commune, shows the possible influence of Mary McCarthy. Other novels of family life and social mores are *Men and Angels* (1985) and *The Other Side* (1989); short stories are collected in *Temporary Shelter* (1987). Among her finest works are the three novellas contained in *The Rest of Life* (1993), about women dealing with the vagaries of love; the title story examines the sensibility of an Italian migrant who spends 'the rest of life' dealing with the death of her lover, who committed suicide when he was 16 and she 15; in 'Immaculate Man' a social worker becomes the lover of a priest, which explores the conflict between flesh and church, a theme which continues in 'Living at Home', the story of an obsessive Italian reporter and his psychiatrist lover. *Good Boys and Dead Girls* (1991) is a collection of essays.

For further biographical information, please see <http://www.columbia.edu/~mg330/Biography.htm> .