



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Katherine Ann Porter. Then, answer questions about it.

Katherine Ann Porter 1890–1980

Critics call Texas-born writer Katherine Anne Porter a “poet of the story.” Her carefully crafted short fiction earned her the highest acclaim, including the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

Porter was born in 1890 in Indian Creek to a family of modest means. As an adult, she lived for several years in Mexico, and later at points throughout the U.S. and Europe. But her most accomplished stories spring from her childhood in central Texas—what she once called her “native land of the heart.”

In masterpieces such as “The Old Order” and “Noon Wine,” Porter renders the turbulent interior lives of her characters with precise, translucent prose. Betrayal and self-delusion are common themes. In the story “Old Mortality,” the young heroine Miranda Gay shakes off “the legend of the past,” resolving to make “her own discoveries.” Yet the whole of Porter’s fiction emphasizes how difficult self-knowledge is to achieve.

When asked whether her fiction was autobiographical, Porter explained that her stories were “true in the way that a work of fiction should be true, created out of all the scattered particles of life I was able to absorb and combine and shape into new being.”

In 2002, First Lady Laura Bush dedicated Porter’s childhood home in Kyle as a National Literary Landmark. The home is now a thriving literary center operated by Texas State University.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Katherine Ann Porter. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. How did Katherine Ann Porter describe her childhood home in Central Texas?
2. What theme did Porter emphasize throughout her fictional writing?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** Porter described her stories as “...created out of all the scattered particles of life I was able to absorb and combine and shape into new being.” Why do you think this might be appealing to readers?