



Women Writers of the Contemporary South (Southern Quarterly Series)

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Women Writers of the Contemporary South edited by Peggy Whitman Prenshaw essays about Lisa Alther, Toni Cade Bambara, Doris Betts, Rita Mae Brown, Ellen Douglas, Ellen Gilchrist, Gail Godwin, Shirley Ann Grau, Beverly Lowry, Bobbie Ann Mason, Berry Morgan, Mary Lee Settle, Lee Smith, Elizabeth Spencer, Anne Tyler, Alice Walker, and Joan Williams The essays in this collection are evidence that the most notable fiction writers of the contemporary South very well may be women writers. As a part of the new generation following the Southern Renaissance-writers not restricted by regionalism-the seventeen featured in this book are women whose first novels or collections of short stories were published after 1945. One essay about each, written by a scholar in the field, gives insight into her southern identity and evaluates her fiction. Included is a checklist of fiction and selected criticism. In a provocative concluding essay, "Why There Are No Southern Writers," novelist Daphne Althas traces changes of style and subjects in recent southern fiction. The writers included differ most noticeably from earlier twentieth-century writers in their depiction of a southern region more typically suburban than rural and in their portrayal of characters more mobile and transient than rooted in the southern past. In fact, in a number of their works the action is set outside the South, although with few exceptions the central characters are recognizably southern. Among these writers are prize winners (Pulitzers, O. Henrys) whose literary reputations are already firmly established, as well as newly emerging talents. Each of them has a striking originality. As a group, their works represent a significant segment of contemporary American fiction. Women Writers of the Contemporary South offers insights into important new writing from one of literary America's most productive regions. Peggy Whitman Prenshaw is Humanities Scholar in Residence at Millsaps College.

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