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Why I Write

Gillian Mears

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Why I Write

Abstract

Although I only began to contemplate my fiction writing as something to be taken seriously when I was a writing student at the (then) NSW Institute of Technology, I began writing stories from an early age. Even these earliest stories reveal an intensive interest in regional idiosyncracies and sadnesses. My shorter fiction continues to try to make sense of countrytown childhood and the accompanying eccentricities, guilts, pleasures, underlying disturbances.



Gillian Mears was born in 1964 and apart from four years in Sydney where she completed a Bachelor of Arts in Communications, has lived most of her life in the NSW country town of Grafton. Her first collection of stories, *Ride a Cock Horse*, won a regional section of the Commonwealth Writers Prize First Book prize. Since then, she has been awarded a Fellowship B from the Literature Board of Australia, The Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship for Prose, 1990, and is the current recipient of the NSW Ministry of Arts Writing Fellowship. University of Queensland Press are publishing a second collection of stories, *Fine-flour*, later in 1990. Her first novel, *The Mint Lawn*, a novel reflecting on the dual processes of infidelity and memory, won the 1990 Australian Vogel Literary Award.

GILLIAN MEARS

Why I Write

Although I only began to contemplate my fiction writing as something to be taken seriously when I was a writing student at the (then) NSW Institute of Technology, I began writing stories from an early age. Even these earliest stories reveal an intensive interest in regional idiosyncracies and sadnesses. My shorter fiction continues to try to make sense of country-town childhood and the accompanying eccentricities, guilts, pleasures, underlying disturbances. A sense of sadness seems to underline much of my fiction. Often this sadness has a direct link to the unbalanced relationship between women and men that flourishes in NSW country towns. Only rarely can my writing alleviate this sadness but I am glad it highlights it. More recently I think my writing has been exploring notions of female guilt, as evidenced in mothers who for some reason must abandon their children or their homes: women whose domestic and emotionally starved lives have brought them to the brink. I often write about the idea of Absent Mothers. My novel, *The Mint Lawn*, works towards an understanding of, and a sympathy, for the often unacknowledged plights that confront Australian women in small country towns: the trap-like nature of unequal marriage and desire.