Smith, Betty

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Emra Williams Glover, 1994; Revised March 2022


"Betty Smith." Photo courtesy of Harper Collins.

After she had been moved to a Shelton, Conn., convalescent home following pneumonia, she died in her sleep. A funeral mass was celebrated in St. Thomas More Church, Chapel Hill, N.C. Her portrait hangs in the New York Museum of Science and Industry.

Betty Smith was a member of the Dramatists Guild, American Federation of Radio, PEN, Pen and Brush, Matrix, and Theta Sigma Phi. Awards included Carolina Playmakers' Alumnae Award; and Playmakers' Alumnae Award.

In 1948 her second novel appeared. Tomorrow Will Be Better, the locale also Brooklyn, did not do so well financially as Tree, though it too was a Book Club selection (as were all her novels) and eventually came out in paperback as well. Betty had articles and stories published in Vogue, Mademoiselle, Good Housekeeping, Harper's, Life, and Collier's and book reviews in the New York Times. In 1968 her third novel, Maggie Now, was published, followed by Joy in the Morning in 1969. In 1963 in this novel she shifted to memories of her first marriage and years at the University of Michigan, and here she again hit her stride. Royalties from Joy in 1964 amounted to $50,000 at the same time that those from Tree were still about $6,000 annually. Metro Goldwyn Mayer bought movie rights for $150,000.

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Her portrait hangs in the Yale Drama School as a member of the Democratic and a Roman Catholic.

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References:
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Ovrlle Prescott. In My Opinion: An Inquiry into the Contemporary Novel (1952)
Raleigh News and Observer, 18 Jan. 1972
Betty Smith Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

Additional Resources:

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