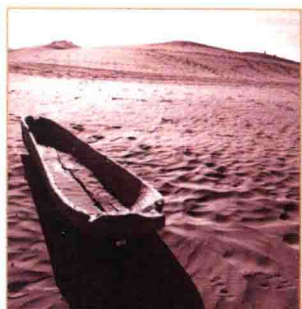


本书获2011—2013北京市属高等学校人才强教深化计划“中青年骨干人才培养计划”经费资助并为其阶段性成果。



# 20世纪美国女性 文学作品选读

吕静薇 孟静宜 编著



知识产权出版社

全国百佳图书出版单位

项目资助：本书获 2011—2013 北京市属高等学校人才强教深化计划“中青年骨干人才培养计划”经费资助并为其阶段性成果。

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## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

20 世纪美国女性文学作品选读: 英文/吕静薇, 孟静宜编著. — 北京: 知识产权出版社, 2014. 4

ISBN 978 - 7 - 5130 - 2668 - 0

I. ①2… II. ①吕…②孟… III. ①英语 — 阅读教学 — 高等学校 — 教材②妇女文学 — 文学评论 — 美国 — 20 世纪 IV. ①H319. 4; I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2014) 第 059410 号

## 内容提要

美国文学在 20 世纪, 尤其是第一次世界大战后才真正走向繁荣, 称霸世界文坛。这期间, 一大批成绩斐然的作家脱颖而出, 而女性作家的表现尤为突出。20 世纪后半叶, 女性文学研究在美国蓬勃发展, 其势头之猛烈, 影响之深远, 也引起了我国学界和文学爱好者的强烈兴趣。本书以 20 世纪美国女性文学作品为脉络, 按照时间顺序编著, 以供有兴趣的教师做选修课程教材, 或供英语专业高年级学生作为课外阅读材料, 丰富知识, 提高其文学鉴赏能力, 并了解 20 世纪美国女性文学在美国文学发展中不可或缺的作用。

责任编辑: 唐学贵

责任出版: 谷 洋

执行编辑: 于晓菲

## 20 世纪美国女性文学作品选读

20SHIJI MEIGUO NÜXING WENXUE ZUOPIN XUANDU

吕静薇 孟静宜 编著

出版发行: 知识产权出版社有限责任公司

电 话: 010 - 82004826

社 址: 北京市海淀区马甸南村 1 号

责任编辑: 010 - 82000860 转 8363

发行电话: 010 - 82000860 转 8101/8029

印 刷: 北京中献拓方科技发展有限公司

开 本: 720mm × 960mm 1/16

版 次: 2014 年 9 月第 1 版

字 数: 300 千字

ISBN 978 - 7 - 5130 - 2668 - 0

网 址: <http://www.ipph.cn>

<http://www.laichushu.com>

邮 编: 100088

责编邮箱: [yuxiaofei@cnipr.com](mailto:yuxiaofei@cnipr.com)

发行传真: 010 - 82000893/82003279

经 销: 各大网上书店、新华书店及相关专业书店

印 张: 19

印 次: 2014 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

定 价: 49.00 元

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# 前 言

20 世纪的美国社会，经历了一战后的经济繁荣；三十年代的经济危机；五十年代的冷战；六七十年代的民权运动、妇女运动。社会的大变迁必然带来艺术创作的大爆发。

美国文学虽然只有 200 多年的历史，但它的发展在世界文学史上已处于不可忽视的地位，是世界文学的一个重要组成部分。在这一发展过程中，20 世纪的美国文学尤为耀眼。可以说，美国文学在 20 世纪才真正走向世界，走向繁荣。一大批优秀的文学家在这一历史时期脱颖而出，创作出大量高质量的精湛之作。美国文学的繁荣，女性文学功不可没。

本书按照时间顺序，选取了 15 位 20 世纪美国重要的女性作家及其作品供读者选读。除了美国本土作家，还特别重点选取了非裔和华裔女作家的作品，期望将美国多元化文学的繁荣呈现在读者面前。

本书面向大学英语专业高年级学生及非专业的英语文学爱好者。有兴趣的教师可选作文学选修课程教材，或供学生作为课外辅助阅读材料，丰富知识，提高其文学鉴赏能力。

本书内容分五个部分：作家简介（英文），主要作品列表（中英对照），代表作品选读（英文），作品注释，讨论问题。作家简介包括作家生平、文学创作发展、文学地位简介。作品列表中罗列的是该作家的主要文学作品，即以小说、诗歌、散文等文体为主的代表作，并非全部作品。列表包括中英文的作品名称、创作（或发表）年代。注释与讨论问题的设置均以帮助读者理解作品的创作背景、主题思想、语言风格为目的，期望有助于读者在阅读后的深层思考。

本书在编撰过程中得到孙万军老师以及张光婴、周建焕两位同学的无私帮助和大力支持，特此致以诚挚谢忱。



最后需要说明的是，虽然我们做出了努力，但本书一定不可避免还存在很多欠缺。敬请老师和同学们，以及所有读者批评指正。

编 者

2014 年 3 月于北京

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## Willa Cather (1873—1947)



Willa Cather was born in Virginia, the oldest child of Charles and Virginia Cather, who moved with their family to the Nebraska Divide when she was ten years old. After a year of farming, they relocated to the town of Red Cloud, and her father went into the real estate business. At the age of seventeen, Cather moved on her own to Lincoln, the state capital and seat of the University of Nebraska; she attended preparatory school for two years and graduated from the university in 1896. In college she studied the traditional classics and participated in the lively contemporary cultural life of the city by reviewing books, plays, and musical performances. Following graduation, she moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to work as an editor of a women's magazine, the *Home Monthly*, which she gave up five years later to teach high-school English and Latin. During this time she also wrote poems and stories,



gathering poems into the book *April Twilights*, in 1903, and stories into *The Troll Garden*, in 1905. Also in Pittsburgh, in 1899, she met Isabelle McClung, from a prominent, wealthy family. She lived in the McClung's from 1901 to 1906, when she moved to New York City to write for the journal *McClure's*. Throughout her life, Cather remained devoted to McClung, experiencing her marriage in 1916 as a severe personal loss, and was devastated by her death in 1938.

Having long wished to write novels, Cather took a leave of absence from *McClure's* in 1911, and wrote *Alexander's Bridge* (1912). This novel was successful, but the next three made her reputation. Each focused on a western heroine: Alexander Bergson in *O Pioneers!* (1913), Thea Kronberg in *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and Antonia Shimerda in *My Antonia* (1918). While Alexandra is extraordinary as the most successful farmer — the only woman farmer — on the Nebraska Divide, and Thea is extraordinary as a gifted opera singer, Antonia has no unusual gifts; for Cather and the novel's many readers she stands for the entire experience of European settlement of the Great Plains. These three novels also manifest Cather's qualities of lyrical yet understand prose writing; they contain a wealth of detail about the lives of Nebraska settlers — Bohemian Czech, German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, French, Russian, and “Americans” from the East — as they learned to farm on the prairie and built communities in which their various ethnicities met and mingled. Cather's is no melting pot ethos, however; rather she sees the frontier as a shifting kaleidoscope of overlapping social groups and individuals. Recognizing that even by the second decade of the twentieth century this period in the U. S. history had disappeared, Cather approached her characters with deep respect for what they had endured and accomplished.

Whether these novels (or any of Cather's other work) encode a lesbian sensibility has been a matter of much critical debate. In life Cather showed no romantic interest in men; in 1908 she began to share an apartment with Edith Lewis, a Nebraskan whom she had met in 1903, and they lived together until Cather's death. (They lived mostly in New York City, but Cather also traveled a great deal; to Europe, to New England, to the Southwest, and back to Red Cloud to visit her family.)



Estrangement from conventional sexuality and sex roles is typical of many of her main characters, male and female; but heterosexual romance and sexual behavior is equally present in her novels. It seems fair to say that close friendship, much more than romantic or sexual love, is the great ideal in her fiction.

Around 1922, according to Cather, her world broke in two; she suffered from the combined effects of poor health, dissatisfaction with the progress of her career, and alarm at the increasing mechanization and mass-produced quality of American life. She joined the Episcopal Church, and her novels took a new direction. Although her books had always celebrated alternative values to the material and conventional, this theme became much more urgent, while the motif of heroic womanhood — which had led many to call her a feminist, though Cather herself kept aloof from all movements — receded. Important books from her “middle period” include *A Lost Lady* (1923) and *The Professor's House* (1925), which deal with spiritual and cultural crises in the lives of the main characters.

Published in 1927, the novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* initiated her “third stage”. Like many other writers and artists in the 1920s, she had become entranced with the American Southwest — especially New Mexico; her first trip to the region in 1912 figured in her depiction (in *The Song of the Lark*) of Thea Kronberg finding spiritual renewal in this landscape. *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, partly written at Mary Austin's home in Santa Fe, is based on the career of Jean Baptiste Lamy (1814—1888), archbishop of New Mexico, and the priest Joseph Marchebeuf, his close friend and collaborator. Another historical novel, *Shadows on the Rock* (1913) is set even further back in time, in seventeenth-century Quebec. In both books, a composite image of high French culture, ceremonial spirituality, and the American landscape contrasts to the material trivia and empty banality of contemporary life.

The short story *Neighbour Rosicky* recapitulates Cather's earlier interest in the pioneers. Cather's focus is on character rather than plot; a life story unfolds through a steady but loose accumulation of conversation and internal reminiscence with minimal intrusion by a narrator. Often, Cather chose to use narrative vantage points that keep



the reader at a distance from the character. She preferred to evoke rather than explain a character and distrusted all psychological theories that purported to account for human behavior. Indeed, to be evocative rather than explanatory was her general literary aim. She once described her work as “unfurnished”, meaning that contained only those details necessary to provoke the reader into imagining her fictional world. “Suggestion rather than enumeration” was another way she described her goal. She believed in art as a high calling and strove to create works of beauty. This commitment to culture and aesthetics set her apart from the social movements of the day but won her considerable critical praise.

Politically, culturally, and aesthetically, Cather was in many respects deeply conservative as well as conflicted — a sophisticated populist, an agrarian urbanite. She believed in high art and superior people, but also thought great human gifts were more often found among the obscure and ordinary than those with great advantages. Her vision of the United States had little room for Native American and African Americans; yet she preferred immigrants from Europe to migrants from the East Coast. She appreciated popular legends and folktales, which appear along with classical myth and allusion in her work. She paid little attention to formal structure; her novels often read more like chronicles than plot-driven stories, which makes them seem artless and real while concealing the sentence-by-sentence care that has gone into the work. The sparseness and clarity of her fiction puts in the modernist tradition, even though in her lifetime she had little interest in the modernist movement.

(The text is selected from *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Shorter Fifth Edition))

## Major Works:

### Novels:

- *Alexander's Bridge*, 1912 《亚历山大的桥》
- *O Pioneers!*, 1913 《啊，拓荒者！》
- *The Song of the Lark*, 1915 《百灵鸟之歌》
- *My Ántonia*, 1918 《我的安东尼亚》

- *One of Ours*, 1922 《我们自己人》
- *A Lost Lady*, 1923 《迷途的女人》
- *The Professor's House*, 1925 《教授的房子》
- *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, 1927 《大主教之死》
- *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, 1940 《莎菲拉和女奴》

#### Collections:

- *April Twilights*, 1903 《四月的黄昏》
- *The Troll Garden*, 1905 《精灵花园》
- *Youth and the Bright Medusa*, 1920 《青春和美艳的美杜莎》
- *Obscure Destinies*, 1932 《无常人生》
- *The Old Beauty and Others*, 1948 《美女暮年及其他故事》

### The Sculptor's Funeral<sup>❶</sup>

A group of the townspeople stood on the station siding of a little Kansas town, awaiting the coming of the night train, which was already twenty minutes overdue. The snow had fallen thick over everything; in the pale starlight the line of bluffs across the wide, white meadows south of the town made soft, smoke-colored curves against the clear sky. The men on the siding stood first on one foot and then on the other, their hands thrust deep into their trousers pockets, their overcoats open, their shoulders screwed up with the cold; and they glanced from time to time toward the southeast, where the railroad track wound along the river shore. They conversed in low tones and moved about restlessly, seeming uncertain as to what was expected of them. There was but one of the company who looked as though he knew exactly why he was there; and he kept conspicuously apart; walking to the far end of the platform, returning to the station door, then pacing up the track again, his chin sunk in the high collar of his overcoat, his burly shoulders drooping forward, his gait heavy and dogged. Presently he was approached by a tall, spare, grizzled man clad

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❶ "The Sculptor's Funeral" (1905) is an important early Cather's text, first published in *McClure's Magazine* in January, 1905 and later reprinted in both *The Troll Garden* (1905) and *Youth and the Bright Medusa* (1920).



in a faded Grand Army suit, who shuffled out from the group and advanced with a certain deference, craning his neck forward until his back made the angle of a jack-knife three-quarters open.

“I reckon she’s agoin’ to be pretty late ag’in tonight, Jim,” he remarked in a squeaky falsetto. “S’pose it’s the snow?”

“I don’t know,” responded the other man with a shade of annoyance, speaking from out an astonishing cataract of red beard that grew fiercely and thickly in all directions.

The spare man shifted the quill toothpick he was chewing to the other side of his mouth. “It ain’t likely that anybody from the East will come with the corpse, I s’pose,” he went on reflectively.

“I don’t know,” responded the other, more curtly than before.

“It’s too bad he didn’t belong to some lodge or other. I like an order funeral myself. They seem more appropriate for people of some reputation,” the spare man continued, with an ingratiating concession in his shrill voice, as he carefully placed his toothpick in his vest pocket. He always carried the flag at the G. A. R.<sup>①</sup> funerals in the town.

The heavy man turned on his heel, without replying, and walked up the siding. The spare man shuffled back to the uneasy group. “Jim’s ez full ez a tick, ez ushel,” he commented commiseratingly.

Just then a distant whistle sounded, and there was a shuffling of feet on the platform. A number of lanky boys of all ages appeared as suddenly and slimily as eels wakened by the crack of thunder; some came from the waiting room, where they had been warming themselves by the red stove, or half-asleep on the slat benches; others uncoiled themselves from baggage trucks or slid out of express wagons. Two clambered down from the driver’s seat of a hearse that stood backed up against the siding. They straightened their stooping shoulders and lifted their heads, and a flash of momentary animation kindled their dull eyes at that cold, vibrant scream, the world-

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① G. A. R. was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army, US Navy, Marines and Revenue Cutter Service who served in the American Civil War.

wide call for men. It stirred them like the note of a trumpet; just as it had often stirred the man who was coming home tonight, in his boyhood.

The night express shot, red as a rocket, from out the eastward marsh lands and wound along the river shore under the long lines of shivering poplars that sentinelled the meadows, the escaping steam hanging in gray masses against the pale sky and blotting out the Milky Way. In a moment the red glare from the headlight streamed up the snow-covered track before the siding and glittered on the wet, black rails. The burly man with the dishevelled red beard walked swiftly up the platform toward the approaching train, uncovering his head as he went. The group of men behind him hesitated, glanced questioningly at one another, and awkwardly followed his example. The train stopped, and the crowd shuffled up to the express car just as the door was thrown open, the spare man in the G. A. B. suit thrusting his head forward with curiosity. The express messenger appeared in the doorway, accompanied by a young man in a long ulster and traveling cap.

"Are Mr. Merrick's friends here?" inquired the young man.

The group on the platform swayed and shuffled uneasily. Philip Phelps, the banker, responded with dignity: "We have come to take charge of the body. Mr. Merrick's father is very feeble and can't be about."

"Send the agent out here," growled the express messenger, "and tell the operator to lend a hand."

The coffin was got out of its rough box and down on the snowy platform. The townspeople drew back enough to make room for it and then formed a close semicircle about it, looking curiously at the palm leaf which lay across the black cover. No one said anything. The baggage man stood by his truck, waiting to get at the trunks. The engine panted heavily, and the fireman dodged in and out among the wheels with his yellow torch and long oilcan, snapping the spindle boxes. The young Bostonian, one of the dead sculptor's pupils who had come with the body, looked about him helplessly. He turned to the banker, the only one of that black, uneasy, stoop-shouldered group who seemed enough of an individual to be addressed.

"None of Mr. Merrick's brothers are here?" he asked uncertainly.



The man with the red beard for the first time stepped up and joined the group. "No, they have not come yet; the family is scattered. The body will be taken directly to the house." He stooped and took hold of one of the handles of the coffin.

"Take the long hill road up, Thompson, it will be easier on the horses," called the liveryman as the undertaker snapped the door of the hearse and prepared to mount to the driver's seat.

Laird, the red-bearded lawyer, turned again to the stranger: "We didn't know whether there would be anyone with him or not," he explained. "It's a long walk, so you'd better go up in the hack." He pointed to a single battered conveyance, but the young man replied stiffly: "Thank you, but I think I will go up with the hearse. If you don't object," turning to the undertaker, "I'll ride with you."

They clambered up over the wheels and drove off in the starlight tip the long, white hill toward the town. The lamps in the still village were shining from under the low, snow-burdened roofs; and beyond, on every side, the plains reached out into emptiness, peaceful and wide as the soft sky itself, and wrapped in a tangible, white silence.

When the hearse backed up to a wooden sidewalk before a naked, weatherbeaten frame house, the same composite, ill-defined group that had stood upon the station siding was huddled about the gate. The front yard was an icy swamp, and a couple of warped planks, extending from the sidewalk to the door, made a sort of rickety footbridge. The gate hung on one hinge and was opened wide with difficulty. Steavens, the young stranger, noticed that something black was tied to the knob of the front door.

The grating sound made by the casket, as it was drawn from the hearse, was answered by a scream from the house; the front door was wrenched open, and a tall, corpulent woman rushed out bareheaded into the snow and flung herself upon the coffin, shrieking: "My boy, my boy! And this is how you've come home to me!"

As Steavens turned away and closed his eyes with a shudder of unutterable repulsion, another woman, also tall, but flat and angular, dressed entirely in black, darted out of the house and caught Mrs. Merrick by the shoulders, crying sharply:

"Come, come, Mother; you mustn't go on like this!" Her tone changed to one of obsequious solemnity as she turned to the banker: "The parlor is ready, Mr. Phelps."

The bearers carried the coffin along the narrow boards, while the undertaker ran ahead with the coffin-rests. They bore it into a large, unheated room that smelled of dampness and disuse and furniture polish, and set it down under a hanging lamp ornamented with jingling glass prisms and before a "Rogers group" of John Alden and Priscilla, wreathed with smilax. Henry Steavens stared about him with the sickening conviction that there had been some horrible mistake, and that he had somehow arrived at the wrong destination. He looked painfully about over the clover-green Brussels, the fat plush upholstery, among the hand-painted china plaques, and panels and vases, for some mark of identification, for something that might once conceivably have belonged to Harvey Merrick. It was not until he recognized his friend in the crayon portrait of a little boy in kilts and curls, hanging above the piano, that he felt willing to let any of these people approach the coffin.

"Take the lid off, Mr. Thompson; let me see my boy's face," wailed the elder woman between her sobs. This time Steavens looked fearfully, almost beseechingly into her face, red and swollen under its masses of strong, black, shiny hair. He flushed, dropped his eyes, and then, almost incredulously, looked again. There was a kind of power about her face — a kind of brutal handsomeness, even; but it was scarred and furrowed by violence, and so colored and coarsened by fiercer passions that grief seemed never to have laid a gentle finger there. The long nose was distended and knobbed at the end, and there were deep lines on either side of it; her heavy, black brows almost met across her forehead; her teeth were large and square and set far apart — teeth that could tear. She filled the room; the men were obliterated, seemed tossed about like twigs in an angry water, and even Steavens felt himself being drawn into the whirlpool.

The daughter — the tall, raw boned woman in crepe, with a mourning comb in her hair which curiously lengthened her long face — sat stiffly upon the sofa, her hands, conspicuous for their large knuckles, folded in her lap, her mouth and eyes



drawn down, solemnly awaiting the opening of the coffin. Near the door stood a mulatto<sup>❶</sup> woman, evidently a servant in the house, with a timid bearing and an emaciated face pitifully sad and gentle. She was weeping silently, the corner of her calico apron lifted to her eyes, occasionally suppressing a long, quivering sob. Steavens walked over and stood beside her.

Feeble steps were heard on the stairs, and an old man, tall and frail, odorous of pipe smoke, with shaggy, unkempt gray hair and a dingy beard, tobacco stained about the mouth, entered uncertainly. He went slowly up to the coffin and stood, rolling a blue cotton handkerchief between his hands, seeming so pained and embarrassed by his wife's orgy of grief that he had no consciousness of anything else.

"There, there, Annie, dear, don't take on so," he quavered timidly, putting out a shaking hand and awkwardly patting her elbow. She turned with a cry and sank upon his shoulder with such violence that he tottered a little. He did not even glance toward the coffin, but continued to look at her with a dull, frightened, appealing expression, as a spaniel looks at the whip. His sunken cheeks slowly reddened and burned with miserable shame. When his wife rushed from the room, her daughter strode after her with set lips. The servant stole up to the coffin, bent over it for a moment, and then slipped away to the kitchen, leaving Steavens, the lawyer, and the father to themselves. The old man stood trembling and looking down at his dead son's face. The sculptor's splendid head seemed even more noble in its rigid stillness than in life. The dark hair had crept down upon the wide forehead; the face seemed strangely long, but in it there was not that beautiful and chaste repose which we expect to find in the faces of the dead. The brows were so drawn that there were two deep lines above the beaked nose, and the chin was thrust forward defiantly. It was as though the strain of life had been so sharp and bitter that death could not at once wholly relax the tension and smooth the countenance into perfect peace — as though he were still guarding something precious and holy, which might even yet be wrested from him.

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❶ A word for someone with one black parent and one white parent, which is now usually considered offensive.



The old man's lips were working under his stained beard. He turned to the lawyer with timid deference: "Phelps and the rest are comin' back to set up with Harve, ain't they?" he asked. "Thank'ee, Jim, thank'ee." He brushed the hair back gently from his son's forehead. "He was a good boy, Jim; always a good boy. He was ez gentle ez a child and the kindest of, em all — only we didn't none of us ever understand him." The tears trickled slowly down his beard and dropped upon the sculptor's coat.

"Martin, Martin. Oh, Martin! Come here," his wife wailed from the top of the stairs. The old man started timorously: "Yes, Annie, I'm coming." He turned away, hesitated, stood for a moment in miserable indecision; then he reached back and patted the dead man's hair softly, and stumbled from the room.

"Poor old man, I didn't think he had any tears left. Seems as if his eyes would have gone dry long ago. At his age nothing cuts very deep," remarked the lawyer.

Something in his tone made Steavens glance up. While the mother had been in the room, the young man had scarcely seen anyone else; but now, from the moment he first glanced into Jim Laird's florid face and bloodshot eyes, he knew that he had found what he had been heartsick at not finding before — the feeling, the understanding, that must exist in someone, even here.

The man was red as his beard, with features swollen and blurred by dissipation, and a hot, blazing blue eye. His face was strained — that of a man who is controlling himself with difficulty — and he kept plucking at his beard with a sort of fierce resentment. Steavens, sitting by the window, watched him turn down the glaring lamp, still its jangling pendants with an angry gesture, and then stand with his hands locked behind him, staring down into the master's face. He could not help wondering what link there could have been between the porcelain vessel and so sooty a lump of potter's clay.

From the kitchen an uproar was sounding; when the dining-room door opened the import of it was clear. The mother was abusing the maid for having forgotten to make the dressing for the chicken salad which had been prepared for the watchers. Steavens had never heard anything in the least like it; it was injured, emotional,