Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 233

Volume 231

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights, Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers Who Lived between 1900 and 1999, from the First Published Critical Appraisals to Current Evaluations

Lawrence J. Trudeau
Project Editor

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Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (*TCLC*) has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, "there is nothing comparable available." *TCLC* "is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own."

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of *TCLC* is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication. Lists of **Representative Works** by different authors appear with topic entries.

- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it originally appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included. Criticism in topic entries is arranged chronologically under a variety of subheadings to facilitate the study of different aspects of the topic.

- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.

- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC.* Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale also produces a paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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Contents

Elizabeth Smart
1913-1986

Canadian novelist, poet, autobiographer, memoirist, and essayist.

The following entry provides an overview of Smart's life and works. For additional information on her career, see *CLC,* Volume 54.

INTRODUCTION

Smart is best known for her experimental novel, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* (1945). In this and later works, including *The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals* (1978) and *In the Meantime* (1984), Smart combined poetic language, intensely compressed prose, and autobiographical elements to explore the nature of female sexuality, as well as a woman's pursuit of personal freedom and artistic expression. Smart treated various themes in her work, including love, motherhood, war, and the position of women in society. The publication of her journals during the mid-1980s, under the title *Necessary Secrets* (1986), revealed the autobiographical basis of most of her writings. Although Smart achieved little recognition during her lifetime, her work has since generated an increasing amount of critical study, particularly among feminist scholars. For these commentators, the author's experimental, confessional writings transcend the narrow confines of introspection and provide a significant contribution to modern Canadian fiction. Dee Horne has observed that Smart's writing "is not just private musing, but thematically focused and artistically unified. That Smart is able to express her experiences in such a coherent, artistic fashion is remarkable and suggests that her imagination and romantic sensibility play a crucial role not only in how she perceives, but also in how she responds to her experiences. By using her journals *as* her art, we glimpse how life and art are intertwined; just as she lives segments of her life as art, so Smart also sees writing as life."

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Smart was born December 27, 1913, in Ottawa, Ontario. She was raised by bourgeois parents, Emma Louise Parr Smart and Russel S. Smart, a barrister, who valued their social position in Ottawa's political and diplomatic sphere. Smart attended Hatfield Hall, a private school, and after graduating was sent to England for a year. In London she studied the piano with a concert pianist and briefly attended King's College, although her mother had forbidden her to enter the university. Upon returning to Ottawa Smart gave up her musical aspirations to pursue a career in writing. She wrote notes and editorials for the *Ottawa Journal* before moving to New York, where she was able to immerse herself in a more literary environment.

Smart traveled extensively in the late 1930s, and after submitting her poetry to expatriate British author Lawrence Durrell, she was introduced to George Barker, a married British poet, with whom she began a romantic relationship that lasted several years. In 1940 Smart returned to Canada and lived at Pender Harbour, in British Columbia. She began writing the first draft of *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept,* and in 1941 she gave birth to the first of four children fathered by Barker. During World War II Smart moved to Washington, D.C., where she lived with Barker and worked at the British Army Office, and later, at the Information Office of the British Embassy.

In 1943 expecting her second child, she arranged to transfer her job to London but was dismissed from work on arriving because she was pregnant. Smart remained in England for the next twenty years, however, supporting herself and her children by writing for fashion magazines and producing copy for various advertising agencies. During much of her life Smart kept a journal, but she also struggled with writer's block. In 1966 she retired to a cottage in Flixton, north Suffolk. That same year, her first novel—which had since gone out of print—was reissued.

In 1977 Smart finally published her second work, a volume of poetry titled *A Bonus.* The following year she published her second novel, *The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals.* During the early 1980s Smart produced two slim volumes of poems, *Ten Poems* (1981) and *Eleven Poems* (1982), as well as *In the Meantime,* a collection that included poems, autobiographical sketches, excerpts from journal entries, and a novella titled *Dig a Grave and Let Us Bury Our Mother,* which the author had written in 1939.

Smart returned to Canada during this time to receive a Senior Arts Grant from the Canada Council in 1982. After a brief stay in Toronto, she accepted an appoint-

ment as writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta, in Edmonton. Smart toured the country giving readings and was warmly received by the Canadian feminist community. The author found her native country as repressive and stifling as she had in her youth, however, and returned to England. *Necessary Secrets,* Smart's journals, were published in 1986, the last work to be issued during her lifetime. Smart died on March 4, 1986, in London. Two more autobiographical works, *Juvenilia: Early Writings of Elizabeth Smart* and *Autobiographies,* were published posthumously, in 1987.

MAJOR WORKS

Smart's first and best-known work, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept,* is often described as a lyrical novel, and it parallels the author's love affair with George Barker during the 1940s. Set during the Second World War, the work emphasizes the impossibility of love in a brutal and violent world. The unnamed narrator is a woman engaged in a passionate and tumultuous affair with a married man. While she achieves transcendent happiness through her romantic and sexual encounters with her lover, she also experiences moments of deep despair and agony, as she faces social restrictions, feelings of jealousy, and periods of separation. Pregnant with her lover's child, the narrator is finally forced to confront the reality of her situation when her lover abandons her. More impressionistic than plot-driven, the work focuses on the descriptions of the narrator's experiences and reactions. Smart also incorporated biblical language and imagery in the novel, including verses from the Old Testament book the Song of Songs. *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* blurs the distinctions between poetry and prose, and consequently some commentators have struggled to accurately classify the work and assess its literary merits. In her foreword written for the 1966 reissue of the book, Brigid Brophy described it as "one of the most shelled, skinned, nerve-exposed books ever written," and asserted that it is one of the few "masterpieces of poetic prose in the world."

Smart's second work of prose, *The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals,* sometimes described as a sequel to *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept,* was inspired by the author's life in London. The novel is related from the perspective of a first-person narrator, a single mother, who struggles to survive and pursue her art among the "rogues and rascals" of London's literary community. The novel charts the narrator's journey of self-discovery over the course of several decades and highlights her inner strength and resilience. In this work Smart also comments more openly on the position of women in modern society, especially the inherent difficulties they face when trying to balance work and motherhood. In the second half of the novel, the narrative becomes increasingly disjointed, as Smart juxtaposes conversation, biographical material, thoughts, and memories to explore the narrator's situation. Nancy E. Wright has argued that this fragmentation of the plot and style of the novel is not "a flaw undermining the narrative's organization" but rather "a mode of representation that questions the ideas of completion and unity signified by the conventions of chronology and biography that structure erotic quests and marriage plots." Wright observes that the fragmented segments in *The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals* "represent segments of experience revised by Smart's postwar fears and hard-won understanding."

Although Smart's later work, *In the Meantime,* has received little critical attention, it contains, in the opinion of some scholars, some of the author's best and most complex writing. In addition to other poems, the work contains a sequence of poetry written on the subject of Smart's return to Canada in the early 1980s. Among their themes, the poems reflect the author's ongoing struggle with her native country's conservative literary community and "the whispering / hells of Academe." *In the Meantime* also includes an autobiographical sketch, titled "Scenes One Never Forgets," and a prose work, *Dig a Grave and Let Us Bury Our Mother,* in which the author grapples with issues of love and female relationships. Sometimes described as a novella, *Dig a Grave and Let Us Bury Our Mother* takes its title from William Blake's poem "Tiriel" and relates the narrator's experiences of a ménage à trois and lesbian affair. When encountering her female lover the narrator blurs the distinctions between motherhood and daughterhood, and at one point proclaims, "I am kissing the one I fly from. It is a wailing child. I am older than the world, older and stronger." For some commentators, this theme represents the author's attempt to transform her tumultuous relationship with her mother through artistic expression. As a result of its homosexual content and sensual linguistic style, the novella has sometimes been compared to the experimental novel *Nightwood,* by American writer Djuna Barnes.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Smart received little critical attention when *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept,* was initially published in 1945. The Canadian prime minister at the time, William Lyon Mackensie King, banned the sale of the work when it first appeared, at the request of Smart's mother. As a result, the novel went largely unnoticed until it was reissued by Panther Books in 1966. Smart's audience widened during the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the publication of *The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals* and *In the Meantime,* and the author found a particularly sympathetic readership in the Canadian feminist community.

In more recent decades Smart's prose works and journals have continued to generate critical attention. While the bulk of this commentary has centered on *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept,* scholars have begun to assess this work within the context of Smart's other writings, especially her journals. For example, Dee Horne and Alice Van Wart, the latter of whom edited Smart's journals for publication, have both studied the influence of Smart's journal writing on her works of fiction, especially her major novel. In Horne's assessment, the "blending of genres in Smart's work widens both our appreciation of the breadth of the novel as well as the particular strengths of the journal as a narrative form." Horne also asserts that through journal writing Smart was able to create a new literary form, the "novel-journal." Other critics, such as Nancy E. Wright and Heather Walton, have examined Smart's depiction of the effects of war on female identity and the relations between genders in *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* and her other work. While Wright has argued that "nationalistic and military discourses" define "gender relations," thereby limiting the "mobility and writing" of Smart's narrators, Walton has suggested that the author offered through the "desiring, passionate, fertile body of the woman lover" a personal response "to the political crisis of her times." Commentators have also continued to discuss the author's formal and stylistic experimentation. Denise Adele Heaps has treated Smart's work in the context of Hélène Cixous's concept of feminine writing, while Méira Cook has emphasized the author's use of metaphoric language in *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept,* which she characterizes as an "extended erotic poem."

Although Smart's work has been neglected by the established literary community for many years, the author remains a significant figure within modern Canadian and, more broadly, women's literature. Feminist scholars, in particular, have praised both her original linguistic style and her transformation of selfhood and self-discovery through the process of artistic expression. According to Alice Van Wart, "in her journals and in her published work, Smart mythifies the exploration of the self; yet it is not a mythification that sets the exploration apart, but a relentlessly honest search that transcends the impulse to document or to confess by extraordinary perceptions and the power and the beauty of her language." Van Wart concludes that "for Smart life and art were one and the same thing. All her writing was life writing."

PRINCIPAL WORKS

By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept (novel) 1945
A Bonus (poetry) 1977
The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals (novel) 1978
Ten Poems (poetry) 1981
Eleven Poems (poetry) 1982
**In the Meantime* (poetry, autobiographical sketches, novella, and journals) 1984
Necessary Secrets: The Journals of Elizabeth Smart (journals) 1986
Autobiographies (autobiography) 1987
Juvenilia: Early Writings of Elizabeth Smart (juvenilia) 1987

*This volume includes the autobiographical sketch, "Scenes One Never Forgets" and the prose work, *Dig a Grave and Let Us Bury Our Mother.*

CRITICISM

Dee Horne (essay date 1991-92)

SOURCE: Horne, Dee. "Elizabeth Smart's Novel-Journal." *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 16, no. 2 (1991-92): 128-46.

[*In the following essay, Horne studies the influence of Smart's journal writing on the style and substance of her novel* By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, *claiming that the importance of the journals "is not as a kind of autobiography" but as a source of "distinctive characteristics," such as "compression" and "intimacy," that Smart uses "to create a new kind of literary form," namely "a* novel-journal."]

> Surely it was time someone invented a new plot,
> or that the author came out from the bushes.
>
> —Virginia Woolf

There has been critical debate about how to categorize Elizabeth Smart's ***By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept.***[1] "One of the questions, that has repeatedly bewildered reviewers and critics of ***Grand Central Station*** since its publication more than 40 years ago," David Lobdell writes, "is whether the work should be considered a novel or a poem" (64). In her introduction to ***Grand Central Station*** Brigid Brophy describes it as one of the "masterpieces of poetic prose" (5). Michael Brian Oliver argues, "***By Grand Central Station*** is an extensive and very special poem"; he distinguishes between poetic prose (which is only "like poetry") and concentrated prose (which "is poetry") (108).[2] We can understand the characteristics which lead to this difficulty in categorization if we examine the origin of ***By Grand Central Station*** in Smart's journals. It is surprising that many critics should either neglect or invalidate the relevance of Smart's journals to her published fiction because those journals not only

constitute the bulk of her writing, but are crucial to the development of her artistic form and play an integral role in her writing process; Smart does not write poetry and fiction and keep journals, but rather writes parts of her works *in* her journals.[3]

That Smart composes her drafts in her journals has important critical and theoretical implications. The form one chooses to write influences how and what one writes. Smart, for instance, writes parts of ***By Grand Central Station*** in her journal and the journal, in turn, influences the way in which she expresses her ideas. As Shirley Neuman points out in "Life-Writing" in the *Literary History of Canada*:

> Moreover, the Canadian life-writing which is most sophisticated and thoughtful about the problems of inscribing the self in literature, and most innovative in its presentation of auto/biographical content, is not auto/biographical in any strict formal or generic sense at all. Instead it crosses and recrosses the borders between auto/biography and fiction in order to question static and holistic conceptions of the writing subject.
>
> (333)

Describing Eli Mandel's concept of poetry, Neumann adds:

> The autobiographical assumptions common to many of these poems are two: that our 'lives'—or at least our awareness of them—exist only in our cultural representations of them, and that, therefore, they are shaped by those representations. Poetry, for Eli Mandel, becomes a *Life Sentence* in which the poet situates poems and travel diaries contiguously in a manner that he hopes will allow him to avoid the confinement of self within any single discourse and to intimate, in the interstices and intersections of different genres, a more multiple and fluid self which both writes and is rewritten.
>
> (335-336)

The blending of genres in Smart's work widens both our appreciation of the breadth of the novel as well as the particular strengths of the journal as a narrative form.

As Alice Van Wart points out in her introduction to ***Necessary Secrets: The Journals of Elizabeth Smart,*** "Far too much has been written about the biographical implications of ***By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept.***" Van Wart correctly argues that this work "is not so much about the love affair between two people as it is about Smart's life-long love affair with language." While Smart's journals do chart her life and give us insight into the genesis of the work, their importance is not as a kind of autobiography, but as a form with distinctive characteristics: truthfulness, credibility, compression, and intimacy are the four which I will concentrate on. Smart uses these to create a new kind of literary form—a *novel-journal*—born of and sharing many of the characteristics of the journals.

The flexibility of the journal form enables Smart to examine her experiences in different ways and to explore different forms of writing. This link is such that what she writes influences how she uses each journal. The fact that she often writes in several journals simultaneously also indicates that she uses each one for different purposes. For example, Smart used two journals (1936-38, 1938) to compose her apprentice work, ***My Lover John,*** and in a journal for 1939 she drafts articles for *The Ottawa Journal,* poems, and much of ***Dig a Grave and Let Us Bury Our Mother.***[4] A green journal (December 1, 1940-March 1, 1941) contains the drafts for ***By Grand Central Station*** and a red notebook (October 30, 1941-February 4, 1942) contains poems and the moving **"Journal from Magnanimous Despair Alone."**

In 1948 and 1949, Smart does not keep any journals and this silence may be a result of the lack of critical attention for her work, ***By Grand Central Station,*** when it was first published in 1945. From 1950-1970, her journals are mainly address and appointment books with occasional notes for commercial writing, and drafts of book reviews; these journals reflect Smart's financial strain and need to write according to the demands of the market to provide income for her family. It is not until 1970, and again in 1976, that she resumes her own writing again. The 1976 unpublished journal illustrates how what Smart writes in her journal influences the function she assigns it.[5] In contrast to many of her 1950-1970 journals (which are often small and frequently soft-covered), the 1976 journal is large and hard covered. This suggests perhaps her endeavour to create something more permanent and her resolution to persevere at her own writing. Smart begins this journal with plans for, and as a beginning draft of, her autobiography. Although she never completes her autobiography, the fact that she starts this work in the beginning of this journal establishes the journal's function; it is a journal in which she reinitiates her own creative writing. This writing, as opposed to her commercial writing, is her priority once again.

As a writer's notebook, Smart's journals reveal the seeds and evolution of her style; her journals evolve from external to internal observations and from personal writing to a more developed form in which Smart begins to speak in her own voice and portray her life as crafted art. The journals contain apprentice works and numerous attempted, but incomplete, works. They also show the important correlation between her life/art and her journals/published writing. At times, they reveal how Smart conceives of ideas for some of her published works and contain parts of her drafts of her poetry and prose.

Smart's new form—novel-journal—is completely different from the genre of the diary-novel, of which Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* is a good example.[6]

The diary-novel is fiction which employs the techniques of the diary, whereas many of Smart's works *are* journals. Nevertheless, her writing is not just private musing, but thematically focused and artistically unified. That Smart is able to express her experiences in such a coherent, artistic fashion is remarkable and suggests that her imagination and romantic sensibility play a crucial role not only in how she perceives, but also in how she responds to her experiences. By using her journals *as* her art, we glimpse how life and art are intertwined; just as she lives segments of her life as art, so Smart also sees writing as life.[7] In *By Heart,* Rosemary Sullivan recounts how Smart saw her relationship with George Barker as realistic rather than romantic:

> 'You get into a state where you fall in love . . . The fact that I was madly in love with the English language and with poetry may have given vent to my feelings.'
>
> (155)

Neuman's claim that "the writing *is* the life" and that "within such a poetics of life-writing, to change the life, one must change the writing" is an apt description of Smart's life and writing (336).

The qualities that make ***By Grand Central Station*** distinctive are direct descendents of the journal.[8] Michael Brian Oliver seems anxious to invalidate the role that her journal plays in the creation of this work:

> I do not mean that ***By Grand Central Station*** is a portrait of the artist as a young woman. The dullest reader could not help thinking that the book is in some way 'autobiographical,' but in reality it is much more than a *kunstlerroman,* more too than a memoir or a diary. The reason is, when Miss Smart wrote the book she refused to take refuge in either distant objectivity or naive privacy. Instead she applied vision to herself, her intimate self happening in space and time. The result is unusual, almost paradoxical: the 'I' of the narrative is not separated by age and values from the author, yet neither is she limited in her understanding of herself. Just the same, the author is left open and unprotected against the misunderstanding and cynicism of the superficially educated reader. Elizabeth Smart definitely wrote about herself in this book, but, for the record, it should be noted that she wrote the first part of the book last (in British Columbia) and the rest of it piece by piece as it happened. From the beginning her vision was equipped with design. Not surprisingly, this method of composition is essentially poetic. ***By Grand Central Station*** achieves, confidently and nonchalantly, a brave lyrical balance between lived experience and aesthetic retreat, though none of the author's emotions were recollected in tranquillity and the red-hot coal of her mind faded very little in creation.
>
> (109)

Taken out of the context of his article, Oliver's comment that ***By Grand Central Station*** achieves a "brave lyrical balance between lived experience and aesthetic retreat," is an accurate definition of the journal. Oliver admits that the book is derived from Smart's journal insofar as she literally wrote it in her journal. What he does not acknowledge, however, is that all of the qualities he admires about the book exist because they are derived from the journal form itself. His statement that Smart's "vision was equipped with design" is problematic because whereas most writers imagine or preconceive the design of a work, Smart's design—and there is design—is not imagined or preconceived in *totality* prior to her writing, but develops as she lives through these experiences. For Smart to have had a preconceived design about how her life would evolve implies that she was a seer.

Foremost among the characteristics born of the journal which make Smart's style in ***By Grand Central Station*** distinctive is, what Smart calls, "truth" (***NS*** [***Necessary Secrets***] 30). In other literary forms, the writer may try to depict the truth through fiction, or imagined events. The journal is a repository for truth, albeit a subjective truth, insofar as the writer is able to perceive it. One of the reasons the journal can function in this way is because the journal lends itself to the illusion of privacy; the writer is not consciously writing for an audience. Thus, the writer does not have any reason to conceal the truth; however, the writer may be unable to perceive, or unwilling to face, the truth. In both cases, the block is part of that writer's subjective truth. Smart's truthfulness in ***By Grand Central Station*** has important repercussions for the narrative. She describes feelings and experiences with an invigorating sincerity and intensity and reaches depths of feeling few people have the courage to explore, let alone express.

Her journal reflections on the nature of truth and beauty are central to her creative process and her concept of it and of art. On June 24, 1933, Smart writes:

> What *is* writing? Isn't it just getting things on paper? What things? Just putting them down? But there is an art. Yes. But doesn't that make artifice. Can that be truth too? The truth, the truth—but there's too much of it. Self-consciousness. Self-analysis. Even writing this. I am saying—am I pretending? Trying to be truthful and soul-sighing! Copying K. M. (Katharine Mansfield) Because she did. No it isn't that. Honestly. I hate this spirit of self-analysis. Selma Lagerloft says something about it. It kills something. G. S. (Graham Spry) gave it to me. He knows it. He doesn't think it's a poison. It is. Oh! Why can't I write the truth—and if I do, why isn't it right? What bores?—surely long windy artifices signifying nothing?
>
> (***NS*** 30)

As a novel, ***By Grand Central Station*** has a theme: love. There is significant evidence which suggests that Smart does not set out to compose her works in her journal, but merely writes down her experiences in her

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