

# WILLA CATHER

b. December 7, 1873

d. April 24, 1947

## AUTHOR

*“The end is nothing,  
the road is all.”*

**She has been hailed  
as one of the great  
writers, especially for  
her depictions of rural  
American life.**

Willa Cather was a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and one of the most prominent American writers of the early 20th century. She is best known for her novels “O Pioneers!” and “My Antonia.”

Born in Back Creek Valley, Virginia, Cather was the oldest of seven children. At age 10, she and her extended family moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska. During adolescence, Cather was known for her masculine style of dress and referred to herself as “Willie.”

She grew up listening to the stories of immigrants and was fascinated by the people and the nature of prairie life. This experience would inspire much of her novel, “My Antonia,” published in 1918.

Following high school, Cather attended the University of Nebraska with aspirations of becoming a doctor. After one of her essays was published in the Lincoln Journal, Cather decided to pursue writing. Having earned her degree, she relocated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She worked for newspapers and magazines, and began publishing her poetry and short stories.

Her work caught the attention of famed editor S. S. McClure, who hired her for McClure’s magazine. She moved to New York and became acquainted with many prominent writers. By 1908, Cather was one of the most influential editors in the country. Her first of 12 novels, “Alexander’s Bridge,” was published in 1912. By the 1920s, Cather was considered one of the leading American novelists.

In 1922, Cather received a Pulitzer Prize for her novel “One of Ours.” She received honorary degrees from the University of Michigan, Columbia, and Yale, and became the first woman to receive an honorary degree from Princeton.

From 1908 until Cather’s death in 1947, she lived with Edith Lewis, a prominent New York editor. In her later years, Cather continued writing short stories, novels and nonfiction essays. She has been hailed as one of the great writers, especially for her depictions of rural American life.



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