

ABOUT MAVIS GALLANT

Mavis Leslie Gallant was a writer (born 11 August 1922 in Montréal, QC; died 18 February 2014 in Paris, France). In 1950, at 28-years-old, the Montréal native decided to do something that many have done before her – she decided to move to Paris and become a writer. There, she submitted her short stories to the New Yorker. Across ten collections, she wrote about early-to-mid-20th-century Québec life, post-Second World War European life, and is often referred to as a “writer’s writer,” – the kind of proprietary praise given by literary professionals to an exemplary member of their own guild. Indeed, Gallant has long been subject to this kind of admiration, while her own decision to live outside of Canada for the better part of her life limited her popularity in her native country.

Gallant’s stories for the New Yorker were collected into a succession of books from the 1950’s - 1970’s, which reached critical acclaim in the United States and Great Britain while she still remained relatively unknown in Canada. This all changed in the late 1970s, when her work began to be published by McClelland and Stewart.

Overall, she wrote 10 collections of short stories over the course of her career, and she was the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates and other honours. During the 1980’s, she won the Governor General’s Literary Award for Fiction for her collection of Home Truths, as well as the Matt Cohen Award, the Rea Award for the Short Story, and the Prix Athanase-David, which was offered by the provincial government of Québec. To this day, Gallant is the only English-language author to receive this award. In 1993, she was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Canada, and in 1996, a major compendium of her work, Selected Stories, was published. In 2012, McClelland & Stewart and Alfred A. Knopf announced plans to publish her personal journals of life in Paris; and an excerpt of these was published in the New Yorker in July 2012.

During her lifetime, scholars, critics and fellow writers acknowledged Gallant as one of contemporary literature’s foremost practitioners of the short story.

Mavis Gallant was by any measure a major Canadian writer.



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