



At Home Inside: A Daughter's Tribute to Ann Petry

Elisabeth Petry

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Ann Petry (1908-1997) was a prominent writer during a period in which few black writers were published with regularity in America. Her novels *The Street*, *Country Place*, and *The Narrows*, along with a collection of short stories and various essays and works of nonfiction, give voice to black experience outside of the traditional strains of poverty and black nationalism.

At Home Inside: A Daughter's Tribute to Ann Petry sifts the myriad contradictions of Ann Petry's life from a daughter's vantage. Ann Petry hoarded antiques but destroyed many of her journals. She wrote, but, failing to publish for years, she used her imagination to design and sew clothes, to bake, and to garden. When fame finally came, Ann Petry did not enjoy the travel it brought. Though she suffered phobias and anxieties all her life, she did not avoid the obligations of literary success until late in her career.

Ann Petry applied her formidable skills to stories she told about herself and her family, and the corrections Elisabeth Petry makes to her mother's inventions will prove invaluable. Talking about her life publicly, Ann Petry acknowledged six different birth dates. She hid her first marriage, and even represented her father, Peter C. Lane, Jr., as a potential killer. Mining Petry's journals Elisabeth Petry creates part biography, part love letter, and part sounding of her mother's genius and luminescent personality.

Elisabeth Petry is a freelance writer with a juris doctor from the University of Pennsylvania. She lives in Middletown, Connecticut, and is the editor of *Can Anything Beat White? A Black Family's Letters* (University Press of Mississippi).

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