

The Street Ann Petry

While one of the central drives in classic American letters has been a reflexive desire to move away from the complexity and supposed corruption of cities toward such idealized nonurban settings as Cooper's prairies, Thoreau's woods, Melville's seas, Whitman's open road, and Twain's river, nearly the opposite has been true in African-American letters. Indeed the main tradition of African-American literature has been, for the most part, strikingly positive in its vision of the city. Although never hesitant to criticize the negative aspects of city life, classic African-American writers have only rarely suggested that pastoral alternatives exist for African-Americans and have therefore celebrated in a great variety of ways the possibilities of urban living. For Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison, the city, despite its many problems, has been a place of deliverance and renewal. In the words of Alain Locke, the city provided "a new vision of opportunity" for African-Americans that could enable them to move from an enslaving "medieval" world to a modern world containing the possibility of liberation. More recent African-American literature has also been noteworthy for its largely affirmative vision of urban life. Amiri Baraka's 1981 essay "Black Literature and the Afro-American Nation: The Urban Voice" argues that, from the Harlem Renaissance onward, African-American literature has been "urban shaped," producing a uniquely "black urban consciousness." And Toni Morrison, although stressing that the American city in general has often induced a sense of alienation in many African-American writers, nevertheless adds that modern African-American literature is suffused with an "affection" for "the village within" the city. Gwendolyn Brook's poetry and Gloria Naylor's fiction, likewise, celebrate this sense of cultural unity in the black city. In addition to these writers, the sixteen new essays in this collection discuss the works of Claude McKay, William Attaway, Willard Motley, Ann Petry, John A. Williams, Charles Johnson, Samuel R. Delany, Ed Bullins, Adrienne Kennedy, and Lorraine Hansberry. The authors of these essays range from critics in America to those abroad, as well as from specialists in African-American literature to those in other fields.

The National Book Award-winning novel—and contemporary classic—that launched the brilliant career of Gloria Naylor, now with a forward by Tayari Jones "[A] shrewd and lyrical portrayal of many of the realities of black life . . . Naylor bravely risks sentimentality and melodrama to write her compassion and outrage large, and she pulls it off triumphantly." —The New York Times Book Review "Brims with inventiveness—and relevance." —NPR's Fresh Air In her heralded first novel, Gloria Naylor weaves together the stories of seven women living in Brewster Place, a bleak-inner city sanctuary, creating a powerful, moving portrait of the strengths, struggles, and hopes of black women in America. Vulnerable and resilient, openhanded and openhearted, these women forge their lives in a place that in turn threatens and protects—a common prison and a shared home. Naylor renders both loving and painful human experiences with simple eloquence and uncommon intuition in this touching and unforgettable read.

"Succeeds mightily...truly a wonderful story. Jones is a talent to be reckoned with." -- Boston Globe Aria is no stranger to tragedy -- as a young girl, she and her older sister and mother survived a car crash that took the lives of their father and beloved baby sister. And although relations with her remaining family are strained, she's done her best to establish a solid, normal life for herself, living in Atlanta and teaching literacy to girls who have fallen on hard times. But now she has a secret that she's not yet ready to share with Dwayne, her devoted boyfriend, or Rochelle, her roommate and best friend: Aria is pregnant. Or so she thinks. The truth is about to make her question her every assumption and reevaluate the life she has worked so hard to build for herself...as it sends her reeling in a direction she had no idea she was destined to go. Praise for Tayari Jones "Tayari Jones is blessed with vision to see through to the surprising and devastating truths at the heart of ordinary lives, strength to wrest those truths free, and a gift of language to lay it all out, compelling and clear." -- Michael Chabon "Tayari Jones has emerged as one of the most important voices of her generation." -- Essence "One of America's finest writers." -- Nylon.com "Tayari Jones is a wonderful storyteller." -- Ploughshares

"The updated edition of this perceptive study could hardly appear at a more auspicious moment, as the latest phase of the tragedy of Haiti is unfolding. It brilliantly illuminates the rich tapestry of Haitian culture and reveals the remarkable resilience of the Haitian people, subjected to centuries of rapacity and violence and brutally punished for revealing the limited definition of freedom adopted by the French and American revolutions, in the author's accurate words. As he relates, they have continued to teach such lessons to this day, frightening the rich and powerful in their own tortured land and at the centers of global rule. It is our great loss if we choose not to understand, and there is no better starting point than this learned and penetrating inquiry." — Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor Emeritus, Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, MIT

A young black girl watches as her aunt's multiple suitors disrupt her family's privacy. The same girl, now on the cusp of adulthood, shares her family's growing fears that her father has disappeared. Acclaimed author Ann Petry penned these and the other unforgettable narratives in *Miss Muriel and Other Stories* more than seventy years ago, yet in them contemporary readers recognize characters who exist today and dilemmas that recur again and again: the reluctance of African Americans to seek help from the police, the rage that erupts in a black man worn down by brutality, the tyranny that the young can visit on their elders regardless of race. Originally published between 1945 and 1971, Petry's stories capture the essence of African American experience since the 1940s.

Seminar paper from the year 2008 in the subject English - Literature, Works, grade: 2,0, course: African American Women Writers, language: English, abstract: To introduce my term paper "Race and Violence in Ann Petry's *The Witness*" I want to start with the definitions of the three terms race, racism and violence mentioned in the title. Regarding to the expressions I want to say something about the U.S. history, and about the current situation in the United States of America, with reference to the African American people. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary explains race as

follows: "one of the main groups that humans can be divided into according to their physical differences, for example the colour of their skin; a group of people who share the same language, history, culture, etc." Racism means "the unfair treatment of people who belong to a different race; violent behaviour towards them; the belief that some races of people are better than others" The history of racism in the United States of America goes back to 17th century and should have come to an end with the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the abolition of slavery (1865). Unfortunately, the abolition of slavery was not the end of the African American martyrdom. It was the beginning of prejudices, discrimination, violence and struggle. When we think of racism against African American people, we think of a long and torturous way African Americans had to go and still go nowadays.

A tale set against a backdrop of slave rights conflicts in the nineteenth-century Chesapeake Bay region finds young runaway Liz Spocott inadvertently inspiring a slave breakout from the attic prison of a notorious slave thief who vengefully calls slave catcher Denwood Long out of retirement. 100,000 first printing.

The inspiration for the acclaimed OWN TV series produced by Oprah Winfrey and Ava DuVernay "Queen Sugar is a page-turning, heart-breaking novel of the new south, where the past is never truly past, but the future is a hot, bright promise. This is a story of family and the healing power of our connections—to each other, and to the rich land beneath our feet." —Tayari Jones, author of *An American Marriage* Readers, booksellers, and critics alike are embracing Queen Sugar and cheering for its heroine, Charley Bordelon, an African American woman and single mother struggling to build a new life amid the complexities of the contemporary South. When Charley unexpectedly inherits eight hundred acres of sugarcane land, she and her eleven-year-old daughter say goodbye to smoggy Los Angeles and head to Louisiana. She soon learns, however, that cane farming is always going to be a white man's business. As the sweltering summer unfolds, Charley struggles to balance the overwhelming challenges of a farm in decline with the demands of family and the startling desires of her own heart.

Professor Adam Krug, the foremost philosopher of his country, is, along with his son, kidnapped by the government in hopes of making him support Paduk, dictator and leader of the Party of the Average Man

Young readers "will be carried along by the sheer excitement of the story" of 17th-century slavery and witchcraft by the million-copy selling author (The New York Times). In 1688, Tituba and her husband, John, are sold to a Boston minister and sent to the strange world of Salem, Massachusetts. Rumors about witches are spreading like wildfire throughout the state, filling the heads of Salem's superstitious, God-fearing residents. When the reverend's suggestible young daughter, Betsey, starts having fits, the townsfolk declare it to be the devil's work. Suspicion falls on Tituba, who can read fortunes and spin flax into thread so fine it seems like magic. When suspicion turns to hatred, Tituba finds herself in grave danger. Will she be judged guilty of witchcraft and hanged? Loosely based on accounts of the period and trial transcripts, Ann Petry's compelling historical novel draws readers into the hysteria of America's deadly witch hunts.

A Study Guide for Ann Petry's "The Street," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs.

In their only fully collaborative literary work, Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich have written a gripping novel of history, suspense, recovery, and new beginnings. *The Crown of Columbus* chronicles the adventures of a pair of mismatched lovers--Vivian Twostar, a divorced, pregnant anthropologist, and Roger Williams, a consummate academic, epic poet, and bewildered father of Vivian's baby--on their quest for the truth about Christopher Columbus and themselves. When Vivian uncovers what is presumed to be the most diary of Christopher Columbus, she and Roger are drawn into a journey from icy New Hampshire to the idyllic Caribbean in search of "the greatest treasure of Europe." Lured by the wild promise of redeeming the past, they are plunged into a harrowing race against time and death that threatens--and finally changes--their lives. A rollicking tale of adventure, *The Crown of Columbus* is also contemporary love story and a tender examination of parenthood and passion.

In *Contending Forces* (1900), her best-known novel and her only work of fiction published in book form during her lifetime, Pauline Hopkins uses the conventions of the sentimental romance as she seeks to encourage social change. In its pages we encounter noble heroes and virtuous heroines, exotic settings, unsavory villains, melodramatic scenes, and a star-crossed love affair. Both an extraordinarily detailed examination of black life in nineteenth-century America and a richly textured and engrossing piece of fiction, *Contending Forces* remains one of the most important works produced by an African-American before World War I.

It's time to diversify your reading list. This richly illustrated and vastly inclusive collection uplifts the works of authors who are often underrepresented in the literary world. Using their keen knowledge and deep love for all things literary, coauthors Jamise Harper (founder of the Diverse Spines book community) and Jane Mount (author of *Bibliophile*) collaborated to create an essential volume filled with treasures for every reader:

- Dozens of themed illustrated book stacks—like Classics, Contemporary Fiction, Mysteries, Cookbooks, and more—all with an emphasis on authors of color and own voices
- A look inside beloved bookstores owned by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
- Reading recommendations from leading BIPOC literary influencers

Diversify your reading list to expand your world and shift your perspective. Kickstart your next literary adventure now! **EASY TO GIFT:** This portable guide is packed with more than 150 colorful illustrations is a perfect gift for any booklover. The textured paper cover, gold foil, and ribbon marker make this book a special gift or self-purchase. **DISCOVER UNSUNG LITERARY HEROES:** The authors dive deep into a wide variety of genres, such as Contemporary Fiction, Classics, Young Adult, Sci-Fi, and more to bring the works of authors of color to the fore. **ENDLESS READING INSPIRATION:** Themed book stacks and reading suggestions from luminaries of the literary world provide curated book recommendations. Your to-read list will thank you. Perfect for: bookish people; literary lovers; book club members; Mother's Day shoppers; stocking stuffers; followers of #DiverseSpines; Jane Mount and Ideal Bookshelf fans; Reese's Book Club and Oprah's Book Club followers; people who use Goodreads.com; readers wanting to expand/decolonize their book collections; people interested in uplifting BIPOC voices; antiracist activists and educators; grads and students; librarians and library patrons wanting to expand/decolonize their book collections; people interested in uplifting BIPOC voices; antiracist activists and educators; grads and students; librarians and library patrons

The Street Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

"The destructive effect of a summer storm on a Connecticut town is exemplified in a single family when a returned veteran finds

that his wife has been unfaithful." Cf. Hanna, A. Mirror for the nation

"Blackness is an art, not a science. It is a paradox: intangible and visceral; a situation and a story. It is the thread that connects these essays, but its significance as an experience emerges randomly, unpredictably. . . . Race is the story of my life, and therefore black is the body of this book." In these twelve deeply personal, connected essays, Bernard details the experience of growing up black in the south with a family name inherited from a white man, surviving a random stabbing at a New Haven coffee shop, marrying a white man from the North and bringing him home to her family, adopting two children from Ethiopia, and living and teaching in a primarily white New England college town. Each of these essays sets out to discover a new way of talking about race and of telling the truth as the author has lived it. "Black Is the Body is one of the most beautiful, elegant memoirs I've ever read. It's about race, it's about womanhood, it's about friendship, it's about a life of the mind, and also a life of the body. But more than anything, it's about love. I can't praise Emily Bernard enough for what she has created in these pages." --Elizabeth Gilbert WINNER OF THE CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD PRIZE FOR AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PROSE NAMED A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY NPR AND KIRKUS REVIEWS ONE OF MAUREEN CORRIGAN'S 10 UNPUTDOWNABLE READS OF THE YEAR

Recasting the history of African American literature, *Shadow Archives* brings to life a slew of newly discovered texts—including Claude McKay's *Amiable with Big Teeth*—to tell the stories of black special collections and their struggle for institutional recognition. Jean-Christophe Cloutier offers revelatory readings of major African American writers, including McKay, Richard Wright, Ann Petry, and Ralph Ellison, and provides a nuanced view of how archival methodology, access, and the power dynamics of acquisitions shape literary history. *Shadow Archives* argues that the notion of the archive is crucial to our understanding of postwar African American literary history. Cloutier combines his own experiences as a researcher and archivist with a theoretically rich account of the archive to offer a pioneering study of the importance of African American authors' archival practices and how these shaped their writing. Given the lack of institutions dedicated to the black experience, the novel became an alternative site of historical preservation, a means to ensure both individual legacy and group survival. Such archivism manifests in the work of these authors through evolving lifecycles where documents undergo repurposing, revision, insertion, falsification, transformation, and fictionalization, sometimes across decades. An innovative interdisciplinary consideration of literary papers, *Shadow Archives* proposes new ways for literary scholars to engage with the archive.

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION FROM NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR TAYARI JONES "How can a novel's social criticism be so unflinching and clear, yet its plot moves like a house on fire? I am tempted to describe Petry as a magician for the many ways that *The Street* amazes, but this description cheapens her talent. . . . Petry is a gifted artist." — Tayari Jones, from the Introduction *The Street* follows the spirited Lutie Johnson, a newly single mother whose efforts to claim a share of the American Dream for herself and her young son meet frustration at every turn in 1940s Harlem. Opening a fresh perspective on the realities and challenges of black, female, working-class life, *The Street* became the first novel by an African American woman to sell more than a million copies.

Seminar paper from the year 2006 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,5, language: English, abstract: Ann Petry, a female Afro-American novelist, published her novel *The Street* in 1946. The setting of this novel is Harlem in the 1940s. The story deals with the life and trials of the Mulatto woman Lutie Johnson and her struggle to find a place in this environment for herself and her son. Hence, *The Street* is also concerned with different aspects of urban life. Thus, one might also claim that Petry's novel is about portraying the difficulties a single coloured woman and mother had in Harlem, living on 116th Street in New York City. Apart from being an urban novel, Petry also captured the symbolic character of Harlem in *The Street*, namely that it is a "(...) symbol of the Negro's perpetual alienation in the land of his birth." Hence, this novel also touches upon the topic of disillusionment in city life. In the following analysis, we will primarily deal with the last chapters of the novel and in particular with the end of the novel, which shows Lutie Johnson leaving Harlem and moving to Chicago. On the one hand, we will be concerned with the reasons and motifs why Lutie is disillusioned and finally leaves Harlem. On the other hand, we will deal with the implications and possibilities that Lutie's movement to Chicago brings with it.

Jazz Internationalism offers a bold reconsideration of jazz's influence in Afro-modernist literature. Ranging from the New Negro Renaissance through the social movements of the 1960s, John Lowney articulates nothing less than a new history of Afro-modernist jazz writing. Jazz added immeasurably to the vocabulary for discussing radical internationalism and black modernism in leftist African American literature. Lowney examines how Claude McKay, Ann Petry, Langston Hughes, and many other writers employed jazz as both a critical social discourse and mode of artistic expression to explore the possibilities "and challenges" of black internationalism. The result is an expansive understanding of jazz writing sure to spur new debates.

Abandoning the Black Hero is the first book to examine the postwar African American white-life novel—novels with white protagonists written by African Americans. These fascinating works have been understudied despite having been written by such defining figures in the tradition as Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Ann Petry, and Chester Himes, as well as lesser known but formerly best-selling authors Willard Motley and Frank Yerby. John C. Charles argues that these fictions have been overlooked because they deviate from two critical suppositions: that black literature is always about black life and that when it represents whiteness, it must attack white supremacy. The authors are, however, quite sympathetic in the treatment of their white protagonists, which Charles contends should be read not as a failure of racial pride but instead as a strategy for claiming creative freedom, expansive moral authority, and critical agency. In an era when "Negro writers" were expected to protest, their sympathetic treatment of white suffering grants these authors a degree of racial privacy previously unavailable to them. White writers, after all, have the privilege of racial privacy because they are never pressured to write only about white life. Charles reveals that the freedom to abandon the "Negro problem" encouraged these authors to explore a range of new genres and themes, generating a strikingly diverse body of novels that significantly revise our understanding of mid-twentieth-century black writing. A biography of the black woman whose cruel experiences as a slave in the South led her to seek freedom in the North for herself and for others through the Underground railroad.

Seminar paper from the year 2006 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,5, , language: English, abstract: Ann Petry, a female Afro-American novelist, published her novel *The Street* in 1946. The setting of this novel is Harlem in the 1940s. The story deals with the life and trials of the Mulatto woman Lutie Johnson and her struggle to find a place in this environment for herself and her son. Hence, *The Street* is also concerned with different aspects of urban life. Thus, one might also claim that Petry's novel is about portraying the difficulties a single coloured woman and mother had in Harlem, living on 116th Street in New York City. Apart from being an urban novel, Petry also captured the symbolic character of Harlem in *The Street*, namely that it is a "(...) symbol of the Negro's perpetual alienation in the land of his birth". Hence, this novel also touches upon the topic of disillusionment in city life. In the following analysis, we will primarily deal with the last chapters of the novel and in particular with the end of the novel, which shows Lutie Johnson leaving Harlem and moving to Chicago. On the one hand, we will be concerned with the reasons and motifs why Lutie is disillusioned and finally leaves Harlem. On the other hand, we will deal with the implications and possibilities that Lutie's movement to Chicago brings with it.

Explores the life and dreams of a young woman who struggles to raise her son in a suffocating ghetto world of racism, human degradation, and uncontrolled violence

The pioneering novel of physical disability, transatlantic travel, and black international politics. A vital document of black modernism and one of the earliest overtly queer fictions in the African American tradition. Published for the first time. A

Penguin Classic A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice/Staff Pick Vulture's Ten Best Books of 2020 pick Buried in the archive for almost ninety years, Claude McKay's *Romance in Marseille* traces the adventures of a rowdy troupe of dockworkers, prostitutes, and political organizers--collectively straight and queer, disabled and able-bodied, African, European, Caribbean, and American. Set largely in the culture-blending Vieux Port of Marseille at the height of the Jazz Age, the novel takes flight along with Lafala, an acutely disabled but abruptly wealthy West African sailor. While stowing away on a transatlantic freighter, Lafala is discovered and locked in a frigid closet. Badly frostbitten by the time the boat docks, the once-nimble dancer loses both of his lower legs, emerging from life-saving surgery as what he terms "an amputated man." Thanks to an improbably successful lawsuit against the shipping line, however, Lafala scores big in the litigious United States. Feeling flush after his legal payout, Lafala doubles back to Marseille and resumes his trans-African affair with Aslima, a Moroccan courtesan. With its scenes of black bodies fighting for pleasure and liberty even when stolen, shipped, and sold for parts, McKay's novel explores the heritage of slavery amid an unforgiving modern economy. This first-ever edition of *Romance in Marseille* includes an introduction by McKay scholars Gary Edward Holcomb and William J. Maxwell that places the novel within both the "stowaway era" of black cultural politics and McKay's challenging career as a star and skeptic of the Harlem Renaissance.

With a new introduction by TAYARI JONES, author of *An American Marriage* 'This is a wonderful novel - the prose is clear, the plot is page-turning, the characters are utterly believable' CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE 'Ann Petry's first novel, *The Street*, was a literary event in 1946, praised and translated around the world - the first book by a black woman to sell more than a million copies . . . Her work endures not merely because of the strength of its message but its artistry' NEW YORK TIMES 'My favorite type of novel, literary with an astonishing plot . . . insightful, prescient and unputdownable' TAYARI JONES New York City, 1940s. In a crumbling tenement in Harlem, Lutie Johnson is determined to build a new life for herself and her eight-year-old boy, Bub - a life that she can be proud of. Having left her unreliable husband, Lutie believes that with hard work and resolve, she can begin again; she has faith in the American dream. But in her struggle to earn money and raise her son amid the violence, poverty and racial dissonance of her surroundings, Lutie is soon trapped: she is a woman alone, 'too good-looking to be decent', with predators at every turn.

This welcome study delivers a long-overdue analysis of the works of Ann Petry (1908–1997), a major mid-twentieth-century African American author. Primarily known as the sole female member of the "Wright School of Social Protest," Petry has been most recognized for her 1946 novel *The Street*, about a woman's struggle to raise her son in a hardscrabble Harlem neighborhood. Keith Clark moves beyond assessments of Petry as a sort of literary descendent of Richard Wright to acclaim her innovative approaches to gender performance, sexuality, and literary technique. Engaging a variety of disciplinary frameworks, including gothic criticism, masculinity and gender studies, queer theory, and psychoanalytic theory, Clark offers fresh readings of Petry's three novels and collection of short stories. Clark explores, for example, Petry's use of terror in *The Street*, where both blacks and whites appear physically and psychologically monstrous. He also identifies the use of dark comedy and the macabre in her startling depictions of race, class, gender construction, and sexual identity in the stories "The Bones of Louella Brown" and "The Witness." Petry's overlooked second novel, *Country Place*—set in a deceptively serene, bucolic Connecticut hamlet—camouflages a world as palsied and nightmarish as the Harlem of her previous work. While confirming the black feminist dimensions of Petry's writing, Clark also assesses the writer's representations of an array of black and white masculine behaviors—some socially sanctioned, others transgressive and taboo—in her unheralded masterpiece, *The Narrows*, and her widely anthologized short story, "Like a Winding Sheet." Expansive in scope, *The Radical Fiction of Ann Petry* foregrounds and analyzes Petry's unique concerns and agile techniques, re-introducing and situating her among more celebrated male contemporaries.

The first book to explore the historical role and residual impact of the Green Book, a travel guide for black motorists Published from 1936 to 1966, the Green Book was hailed as the "black travel guide to America." At that time, it was very dangerous and difficult for African-Americans to travel because black travelers couldn't eat, sleep, or buy gas at most white-owned businesses. The Green Book listed hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and other businesses that were safe for black travelers. It was a resourceful and innovative solution to a horrific problem. It took courage to be listed in the Green Book, and *Overground Railroad* celebrates the stories of those who put their names in the book and stood up against segregation. It shows the history of the Green Book, how we arrived at our present historical moment, and how far we still have to go when it comes to race relations in America.

A collection of critical essays examining the short stories of noted African American writer Ann Petry.

A New York Times Outstanding Book for young adult readers, this biography of the famed Underground Railroad abolitionist is a lesson in valor and justice. Born into slavery, Harriet Tubman knew the thirst for freedom. Inspired by rumors of an "underground railroad" that carried slaves to liberation, she dreamed of escaping the nightmarish existence of the Southern plantations and choosing a life of her own making. But after she finally did escape, Tubman made a decision born of profound courage and moral conviction: to go back and help those she'd left behind. As an activist on the Underground Railroad, a series of safe houses running from South to North and eventually into Canada, Tubman delivered more than three hundred souls to freedom. She became an insidious threat to the Southern establishment—and a symbol of hope to slaves everywhere. In this "well-written and moving life of the 'Moses of her people'" (*The Horn Book*), an acclaimed author makes vivid and accessible the life of a national hero, soon to be immortalized on the twenty-dollar bill. This intimate portrait follows Tubman on her journey from bondage to freedom, from childhood to the frontlines of the abolition movement and even the Civil War. In addition to being named a New York Times Outstanding Book, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* was also selected as an American Library Association Notable Book.

In one volume, two landmark novels about the terrible power of race in America from one of the foremost African American writers of the past century. Ann Petry is increasingly recognized as one of the essential American novelists of the twentieth century. Now, she joins the Library of America series with this deluxe hardcover volume gathering her two greatest works. Published in 1946 to widespread critical and popular acclaim--it was the first novel by an African-American woman to sell over a million copies--*The Street* follows Lutie Johnson, a young, newly single mother, as she struggles to make a better life for her son, Bub. An intimate account of the aspirations and challenges of black, female, working-class life, much of it set on a single block in Harlem, the novel exposes structural inequalities in American society while telling a complex human story, as overpriced housing, lack of opportunity, sexual harassment, and racism conspire to limit Lutie's potential and to break her buoyant spirit. Less widely read than her blockbuster debut and still underappreciated, *The Narrows* (1953) is Petry's most ambitious and accomplished novel--a multi-layered, stylistically innovative exploration of themes of race, class, sexuality, gender, and power in postwar America. Centered around an adulterous interracial affair in a small Connecticut town between the young black scholar-athlete Link Williams and white, privileged munitions heiress Camilo Sheffield, it is also a fond, incisive community portrait, full of unforgettable minor characters, unexpected humor, and a rich sense of history. Also included in the volume are three of Petry's previously uncollected essays related to the novels and a newly researched chronology of the author's life, prepared with the assistance of her daughter Elisabeth Petry. LIBRARY OF AMERICA is an independent nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1979 to preserve our nation's literary heritage by publishing, and keeping permanently in print, America's best and most significant writing. The Library of America series includes more than 300 volumes to date, authoritative editions that average 1,000 pages in length, feature cloth covers, sewn bindings, and ribbon markers, and are printed on premium acid-free paper that will last for centuries.

"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."--BOOK JACKET.

Ann Petry (1908-1997) achieved prominence during a period in which few black women were published with regularity in America. Her novels *Country Place* (1947) and *The Narrows* (1988), along with various short stories and nonfiction, poignantly described the struggles and triumphs of middle-class blacks living in primarily white communities. Petry's ancestors, the James family, served as inspiration for much of her fiction. This collection of more than four hundred family letters, edited by the daughter of Ann Petry, is an engaging portrait of black family life from the 1890s to the early twentieth century, a period not often documented by African American voices. Ann Petry's maternal grandfather, Willis Samuel James, was a slave taught by his children to read and write. He believed "the best place for the negro is as near the white man as he can get." He followed that "truth," working as coachman for a Connecticut governor and buying a house in a white neighborhood in Hartford. Willis had sixteen children by three wives. The letters in this collection are from him and his second wife, Anna E. Houston James, and five of Anna's children, of whom novelist Ann Petry's mother, Bertha James Lane, was the oldest. History is made and remade by the availability of new documents, sources, and interpretations. *Can Anything Beat White?* contributes a great deal to this process. The experiences of the James family as documented in their letters challenge both representations of black people at the turn of the century as well as our contemporary sense of black Americans.

Link Williams is a handsome and brilliant Dartmouth graduate who tends bar due to the lack of better opportunities for an African American man in a staid mid-century Connecticut town. The routine of Link's life is interrupted when he intervenes to save a woman from a late-night attack. Drinking in a bar together after the incident, "Camilo" discovers that her rescuer is African American and he learns that she is white. Unbeknownst to him, "Camilo" (actually Camilla Treadway Sheffield) is a wealthy married woman who has crossed the town's racial divide to relieve the tedium of her life. Thus brought together by chance, Link and Camilla draw each other into furtive encounters that violate the rigid and uncompromising social codes of their own town and times. As *The Narrows* sweeps ahead to its shattering denouement, Petry shines a harsh yet richly truthful light on the deforming harm that race and class wreak on human lives. In a fascinating introduction to this new edition, Keith Clark discusses the prescience with which Petry chronicled the ways tabloid journalism, smug elitism, and mob mentality distort and demonize African American men.

In her final novel, "a beautiful and devastating examination of family, society and race" (*The New York Times*), Dorothy West offers an intimate glimpse into the Oval, a proud, insular community made up of the best and brightest of the East Coast's Black bourgeoisie on Martha's Vineyard in the 1950s. Within this inner circle of "blue-vein society," we witness the prominent Coles family gather for the wedding of the loveliest daughter, Shelby, who could have chosen from "a whole area of eligible men of the right colors and the right professions." Instead, she has fallen in love with and is about to be married to Meade Wyler, a white jazz musician from New York. A shock wave breaks over the Oval as its longtime members grapple with the changing face of its community. With elegant, luminous prose, Dorothy West crowns her literary career by illustrating one family's struggle to break the shackles of race and class.

In his in-depth analysis of the works of Ann Petry (1908--1997), Keith Clark moves beyond assessments of Petry as a major mid-twentieth-century African American author and the sole female member of the "Wright School of Social Protest." He focuses on her innovative approaches to gender performance, sexuality, and literary technique. Engaging a variety of disciplinary frameworks, including gothic criticism, masculinity and gender studies, queer theory, and psychoanalytic theory, Clark offers fresh readings of Petry's three novels and collection of short stories. He explores, for example, Petry's use of terror in *The Street*, where both blacks and whites appear physically and psychically monstrous. He identifies the use of dark comedy and the macabre in the stories "The Bones of Louella Brown" and "The Witness." Petry's overlooked second novel, *Country Place* -- set in a deceptively serene Connecticut hamlet -- camouflages a world as nightmarish as the Harlem of her previous work. While confirming the black feminist dimensions of Petry's writing, Clark also assesses the writer's representations of an array of black and white masculine behaviors -- some socially sanctioned, others taboo -- in her unheralded masterpiece *The Narrows* and her widely anthologized short story

"Like a Winding Sheet." Expansive in scope, *The Radical Fiction of Ann Petry* analyzes Petry's unique concerns and agile techniques, situating her among more celebrated male contemporary writers.

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