

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Poet Description:

Born in Rockland, Maine, Millay was educated at Vassar. In 1917, she moved to New York's Greenwich Village and joined the revolutionary mix of politics, modernism, and sexual experimentation that typified the community. Her poem "First Fig" is usually taken as the signature poem of an ecstatically romantic mode of writing, but it is offered here as an emblem of the more risky mix of commitments that shaped her life. She was in fact consistently involved in political causes from the 1920s through World War II and regularly wrote poems about them, as "Justice Denied in Massachusetts" and "Say That We Saw Spain Die" will demonstrate. But her most important legacy is no doubt the witty, antiromantic sonnets she wrote in significant number. Their rhetorical dexterity and confidence reflects an adaptation of Elizabethan sonnet style, while the gender instability and reversal of conventional gendered roles embodies both her feminism and the rethinking of sexual identity that preoccupied modernist writers and the general public. These poems merit a major place in the history of the modern sonnet.

Race/Ethnicity:

European ^[1]

Picture:



Gender:

Female ^[2]

Sexuality:

Straight ^[3]

First Name:

Edna St. Vincent

Last Name:

Millay

Birth & Death Dates:

Monday, February 22, 1892 to Thursday, October 19, 1950

School of Poetry:

Modernist ^[4]

Birth Place:

Rockland , Maine

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#) ^[5]

Maine US

Death Place:

Austerlitz , New York

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#) ^[6]

New York US

Group visibility:

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[4] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/school-poetry/modernist>

[5] <http://maps.google.com?q=46.880607+-87.363281+%28%2C+Rockland%2C+ME%2C+%2C+us%29>

[6] <http://maps.google.com?q=42.311754+-73.473168+%28%2C+Austerlitz%2C+NY%2C+%2C+us%29>