

Margaret Laurence

(July 18, 1926-January 5, 1987)



Canadian author, known for her outspoken support of peace, women's rights, and other progressive causes.

She wrote stories from the time she was seven and throughout high school and college. Her first jobs were in journalism,

She moved to England in 1949, and then to British Somaliland. She immersed herself in West African literature. From 1952 to 1958 she lived in Africa and

wrote several books from her time there.

She lived in Vancouver, 1957-62 and joined UCV. In 1961 Margaret wrote her lifelong friend, "this year (don't faint) I'm teaching Sunday School."

She fashioned a retelling of the birth of Jesus, in which Joseph and Mary do not particularly care about their coming child's gender published as *The Christmas Birthday Story*, 1980. She credits UCV for having "first inspired her" to write the story.

In 1976, she began attending the Lakefield United Church. The United Church of Canada was thus both the church of her youth and the church of her later years.

Answering up to 1,500 letters a year, she inspired and encouraged a younger generation of Canadian authors.

She struggled with alcoholism and depression and old insecurities. She died at 60 after being diagnosed with cancer. Her autobiography is *Dance on the Earth*

Article by [John Marsh](#) - June 24, 2003