



# Carol Shields and the Writer-Critic

*Brenda Beckman-Long*

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## Carol Shields and the Writer-Critic Brenda Beckman-Long

Throughout her literary and critical career, Canadian writer Carol Shields (1935–2003) resisted simple categorization. Her novels are elegant puzzles that confront the reader with the ambiguity of meaning and narrative, yet their position within Shields' critical feminist project has, until now, been obscured.

In *Carol Shields and the Writer-Critic*, Brenda Beckman-Long illuminates that project through the study of Shields' extensive oeuvre, including her fiction and criticism. Beckman-Long brings depth to her analysis through close readings of six novels, including the award-winning *The Stone Diaries*. Elliptical, open-ended, and concerned with women writing about women, these novels reveal Shields' critique of dominant masculine discourses and her deep engagement with the long tradition of women's life writing. Beckman-Long's original archival research attests to Shields' preoccupation with the changing efforts of waves of feminist activism and writing.

A much needed reappraisal of Shields's innovative work, *Carol Shields and the Writer-Critic* contributes to the scholarship on life writing and autobiography, literary criticism, and feminist and critical theory.

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