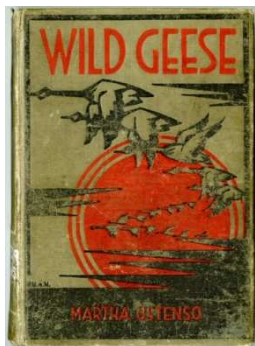
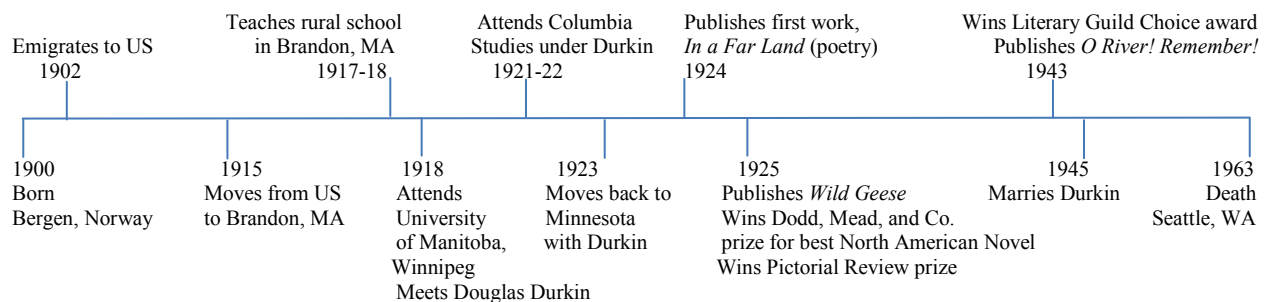


Ostenso, Martha (1900-1963)

Martha Ostenso was a critically acclaimed and best-selling author best known for her first novel, *Wild Geese* (1925). Ostenso is significant to the development of Canadian literary modernism for her foundational contributions to “prairie realism,” a literary movement with which Frederick Philip Grove is also associated. Prairie realism rejects romanticized versions of the West for detailed descriptions of the landscape and unsentimental examinations of the physical and mental burdens of prairie settler life.



Timeline of Life



Wild Geese has, in particular, been canonized as a landmark work in modern Canadian realist fiction. The novel unravels homesteader Caleb Gare's imposition of patriarchal, anthropocentric constructions on the family and on the land by positioning these constructions against natural cycles of fecundity and decay. Caleb's poetically just death by flaming muskeg adds a romantic flourish to the novel's otherwise stark realism. *Wild Geese* received a \$13,500 prize for year's best novel from Dodd, Mead, and Co., and the first novel-prize offered by the Pictorial Review. Its canonical status in Canada is evinced by its ongoing reprints in McClelland's



definitive New Canadian Library (NCL) series, most recently in 2008. Though there is speculation that much of Ostenso's oeuvre was collaboratively created with Douglas Durkin, most critics believe that *Wild Geese* was written exclusively by Ostenso. Ostenso's later novel *O River! Remember!* (1943) was honored with a Literary Guild Choice award. Ostenso died in November 1963.

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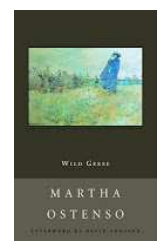
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Martha Ostenso

