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| Smart, Elizabeth (1913-1986) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Elizabeth Smart was a Canadian poet and novelist, best known for *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept–*  a novella-length work of prose poetry that weaves surrealist, personalist, feminist, and anarchist ideals with Canadian, American, and European political sentiments.  Smart was born to prominent Canadian lawyer Russel Smart and his wife Emma Louise Parr; two of Ottawa’s more storied socialites. The Smart family frequently hosted Ottawa’s noted political and dramatic figures, affording their children the opportunity to grow up in the company of poet Duncan Campbell Scott, Canadian broadcasting pioneer Graham Spry, and William Lyon Mackenzie King, the 10th Prime Minister of Canada. |
| Elizabeth Smart was a Canadian poet and novelist, best known for *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept–*  a novella-length work of prose poetry that weaves surrealist, personalist, feminist, and anarchist ideals with Canadian, American, and European post-war political sentiments.  Smart was born to prominent Canadian lawyer Russel Smart and his wife Emma Louise Parr; two of Ottawa’s more storied socialites. The Smart family frequently hosted Ottawa’s noted political and dramatic figures, affording their children the opportunity to grow up in the company of poet Duncan Campbell Scott, Canadian broadcasting pioneer Graham Spry, and William Lyon Mackenzie King, the 10th Prime Minister of Canada.   Smart studied music at King’s College, London, and in 1937 obtained a position with the international advocacy organization *Associated Country Women of the World*. This allowed Smart to travel the world as an assistant of Margaret Robertson Watt before returning to England to study theatre under French avant-garde director Michel Saint-Denis. In 1938, Smart struck up a relationship with surrealist artist Jean Varda, and accompanied him to his residence in Cassis until the impending war found her relegated back to her home in Canada. Separated from her coveted artistic circles, Smart continued to voraciously read modernist poetry and began exchanging letters with LAWRENCE DURRELL after first submitting poetry to his magazine *Booster*. Smart’s correspondence with Durrell brought to light her fondness for the works of George Barker, and Durrell proceeded to connect the two in hopes that Smart would purchase a needy Barker’s manuscripts.   While corresponding with Durrell, Barker, and Henry Miller, among others, Smart took up residency in New York, then Mexico City, and eventually in California’s Big Sur artist colony. Smart lobbied for and succeeded in flying Barker and his family from Japan to join her. This lead to a life-long tumultuous relationship between Smart and Barker, details of which would eventually find their way into *By Grand Central Station*. In 1941, Smart moved to Pender Harbour, British Columbia, to have Barker’s illegitimate child in secret. By December of that same year, Smart finished *By Grand Central Station*. Through her novella, Smart extracted moments from across her personal narrative, drawing together her experiences with the French surrealists, the colony at Big Sur, her life in Ottawa, and her time spent in Pender Harbour.  Smart returned to London during the war in 1943 and remained there for the majority of her life. She had two more children with Barker, though he never divorced his wife. She worked for the Ministry of Information, wrote several cookbooks, and was, at one point, London’s highest paid advertising copywriter. She returned to Canada briefly in 1982 as the writer-in-residence of the University of Alberta. |
| Further reading:  (Van Wart)  (Sullivan)  (Smart)  (Smart, In The Meantime)  (Smart, A Bonus)  (Smart, The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals)  (Smart, On the Side of the Angels: the Second Volume of the Journals of Elizabeth Smart)  (Smart, Necessary Secrets: the Journals of Elizabeth Smart)  (Wright)  (Lobdell)  (Gifford)  (Gifford, Anarchist Surrealism & Canadian Apocalyptic Modernism: Allusive Political Praxis in Elizabeth Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept)  (Frojdendahl) |