

On a more personal note, 1984 was the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Orwell's first novel, *Burmese Days*. This was published in New York in October 1934, but was not issued in Britain until June 1935, and then with some censoring by the publisher, who feared a libel suit.

In June 1944, when Orwell was forty years old (just short of his forty-first birthday), he and his wife adopted a three-week old boy, whom they named Richard. When the boy would be as old as was his adoptive father at the time of his birth, it would be 1984. Orwell occasionally thought of the child in terms of years; in a column published in the *Tribune* on February 2, 1945, Orwell described the blitz in this way, "A not-too-distant explosion shakes the house, the windows rattle in their sockets, and in the next room the 1964 class wakes up and lets out a yell or two." Orwell may have been trying to envision his son's world when his son would be his age.

—BERNARD J. SUSSMAN, *Washington, D. C.*

Porter's THE JILTING OF GRANNY WEATHERALL

The stunning gesture of the proud old woman puffing out the light of her life draws upon the Biblical parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. Several critics have referred to the heavenly bridegroom in general (Ray West, *Katherine Anne Porter*, University of Minnesota Press, 1963, p.9; William Nance, *Katherine Anne Porter and the Art of Rejection*, University of North Carolina Press, 1963, p.44; John Hardy, *Katherine Anne Porter*, Frederick Ungar, 1973, p.95), and others, more explicitly (Joseph Wiesenfarth, "Internal Opposition in Porter's 'Granny Weatherall,'" *Critique* 11, [1969], 52-53; George Hendrick, *Katherine Anne Porter*, Twayne, 1965, p.92). George Hendrick, in addition to giving the terminology and its Biblical source (Matthew 25: 1-13), comments: "She could not forgive being jilted again. Willful to the last, she would not be jilted again; she herself blew out the light" (p.92).

Indeed. As the story indicates, Granny has become impatient and even angry at the delay of the bridegroom: "Again no bridegroom and the priest in the house." This second time, however, the situation is different. During the sixty years which followed the jilting, Granny has become stronger and more independent. As she approaches the moment of death, she remembers the jilting and then surprises the reader with an action contrary to the Biblical imagery.

For in the parable both the wise and the foolish virgins were waiting for the bridegroom. Due to the bridegroom's delay, the foolish virgins ran out of oil for their lamps. While they went out to buy some more, the bridegroom came and was greeted by the wise virgins. Unlike the foolish virgins, when Granny becomes aware of the delay, she does not worry about the oil—she had been ready for the past twenty years. More significantly, unlike the wise virgins, she decides not to wait any longer. She jilts the heavenly bridegroom by blowing out the lamp, an effective symbol of both the soul and patient vigilance.

Thus Granny, finally frustrated by the confused, empty waiting and the resurrected indignity of George's jilting, rejects her life and God Himself. Even though she had worked hard to put aside her thoughts of George and had kept up her religious practices throughout her life, hurt pride overcomes her religious sensibilities when she does not receive a sign from God. In her pique the sixty years of "putting the whole place to rights" come to the fore, and she takes the situation into her hands. She will not wait. She will not be like "a shuffle of leaves in the everlasting hand of God, He blew on them and they danced and rattled." This time she jilts. The grammatically ambiguous title attests that the dependent maiden, who was jilted, has become the defiant matriarch who jilts in return. Granny Weatherall is both the jilted and the jilter.

When Granny blows out the lamp, we see a side of raw strength we had not expected, and we realize the depths of unhappiness despite her bold exterior. The last words of the story shock like the ending of "A Rose for Emily." When the light goes out, we hold our breaths, anticipating we know not what, but then the grand gesture of defiance suddenly ceases and fades into silence.

—DAVID R. MAYER, *Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan*

SAVIOR! I'VE NO ONE ELSE TO TELL

Savior! I've no one else to tell—
And so I trouble *thee*.
I am the one forgot thee so—
Dost thou remember me?
Nor, for myself, I came so far—
That were the little load—
I brought thee the imperial Heart
I had not strength to hold—
The Heart I carried in my own—
Till mine too heavy grew—
Yet—strangest—*heavier* since it went—
Is it too large for *you*?

—EMILY DICKINSON

Dickinson's SAVIOR! I'VE NO ONE ELSE TO TELL

In his query (*The Explicator*, vol. 36, Summer 1978), Nat Henry writes that Emily

