



CONVERSATIONS WITH KATHARINE WEBER: WHO OWNS HISTORY? MAKING FICTION FROM THE FACTS OF THE TRIANGLE FIRE OF 1911

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Queens campus, 7 p.m., Carnesecca Arena



Katharine Weber

WHO OWNS HISTORY?

MAKING FICTION FROM THE FACTS OF THE TRIANGLE FIRE OF 1911. DO WE ACCEPT ALL THE DOCUMENTS AND DO WE LISTEN EQUALLY TO ALL THE VOICES THAT COME TO US IN MYRIAD FORMS THAT MAKE UP ANY HISTORIC RECORD? OR ARE WE CONVINCED THAT THERE ARE

ALWAYS DISCREPANCIES THAT REVEAL THE POSSIBILITY OF HIDDEN STORIES TO EXPLORE? THE TRIANGLE FIRE IS ONE OF THE MOST TERRIBLE TRAGEDIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY. EXAMINING IT THROUGH THIS FICTIONAL LENS CAN FORCE US TO CONSIDER HOW WE TELL OUR STORIES, HOW WE HEAR THEM, AND HOW HISTORY IS FORGED FROM UNVERIFIABLE TRUTHS.

KATHARINE WEBER's fiction debut in print, the short story "Friend of the Family," appeared in *The New Yorker* in January 1993. Her first novel, *Objects in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear* (of which that story was a chapter), was published by Crown Publishers, Inc., in 1995 and was published in paperback by PicadorUSA in 1996. She was named by *Granta* to the controversial list of 50 Best Young American Novelists in 1996. Her second novel, *The Music Lesson*, was published by Crown Publishers, Inc. in 1999, and was published in paperback by PicadorUSA in 2000. *The Music Lesson* has been published in 12 foreign languages. *The Little Women* was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 2003 and by Picador in 2004. All three novels were named Notable Books by *The New York Times Book*

Review. Katharine's fourth novel, *Triangle*, which takes up the notorious Triangle Waist Company factory fire of 1911, was published in 2006 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, and in 2007 by Picador. *Triangle* was named a Finalist for the Paterson Fiction Prize and the John Gardner Fiction Book Award and has recently been named a Finalist for the Connecticut Book Award.

Katharine was born in New York City in 1955. She grew up in Forest Hills Gardens and attended P.S. 101, The Kew-Forest School, and Forest Hills High School, which she left after 11th grade in order to attend the inaugural year of the Freshman Year Program at The New School for Social Research (now Lang College at New School University) in 1972. She continued to attend The New School part time while working as an editorial assistant at Harper & Row, at The American Institute of Graphic Arts and for the architect Richard Meier, before leaving New York when she married cultural historian Nicholas Fox Weber in 1976 and moved to Connecticut. They have two daughters, now in their 20s.

Before publishing fiction, Katharine wrote numerous book reviews, essays and literary profiles for a range of publications, as well as a weekly newspaper column in the Sunday *New Haven Register* for two years. A thesis advisor for the Columbia University Graduate School of the Arts, Katharine taught fiction writing at Yale University for eight years and was the Kratz Writer in Residence at Goucher College in 2006.

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