

Therese Anne Fowler and Maligned Women: Setting the Story Straight on Zelda Fitzgerald and Alva Vanderbilt Belmont

an Interview by Sheryl Cornett
notes contributed by the NCLR staff



COURTESY OF AMAZON STUDIOS

It was a dark, rainy Sunday afternoon in my lonesome North Carolina State University office as I sat writing this head note to an interview with one of my favorite North Carolina writers – and a favorite human being in general. Suddenly, a retweet came in from the author herself, Therese Anne Fowler: she was passing on an encouraging word from Karen Joy Fowler, the “Ten Things [she] Learned from Ursula K. Le Guin,” in homage to Le Guin’s recent death: “Other writers are not your competition. They are your sustenance.”¹ The sky seemed to brighten; the rain let up for a moment.

This tweet’s timeliness is a reminder of the sunny person and friend Therese Anne Fowler is to many writers, both local and national, and an inspiring example to literary artists on various stages of the publication journey. After Fowler’s internationally acclaimed novels *Souvenir* (2007), *Reunion* (2009), and *Exposure* (2011), the publication of her fourth novel, *Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald* (2013), took her storytelling fame and talent to a new place on national and global literary maps.² Catapulted onto a world literary stage, Therese has found herself a guest of honor at events like the 2013 premiere of Baz Lurhmann’s film version of *The Great Gatsby*, as well as selected as North Carolina State’s 2017 College of Humanities and Social Sciences Distinguished Alumna of the Year. These accolades – and interviews and reviews in venues such as NPR’s *Weekend Edition* and

ABOVE Christina Ricci as Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald in *Z: The Beginning of Everything*, Amazon Studios, 2015

¹ Karen Joy Fowler, “Ten Things I Learned from Ursula K. Le Guin,” *Paris Review* 25 Jan. 2018: web.

² Therese Anne Fowler, *Souvenir* (New York: Ballantine, 2008); *Reunion* (New York: Ballantine, 2009); *Exposure* (New York: Ballantine, 2011); *Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2013).