



Heather O'Neill is a Canadian author. She has written and published novels, short stories, essays, screenplays, as well as journal articles. Her debut novel, *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, was published in 2006 and won the Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction, among being shortlisted and longlisted for 9 other major awards. Impressively, O'Neill was named by *Chatelaine* as one of the most influential women in Canada, seeing as her first novel was a sensation that went on to become an international bestseller.

O'Neill was born in Montreal, Canada. You can see the influence of her Montreal upbringing weaved within the words of her novels in setting, description, tone, and atmosphere. Her father was also from Montreal, while her mother is of Southern American descent. O'Neill spent her childhood with her parents and 3 siblings, raised in Montreal. However, after her parents divorced, she moved to the American South with her mother for several years.

When O'Neill finally returned to Montreal she was educated at Dawson College and McGill University. She had her daughter, Arizona, at an early age and raised her as a single parent. Even though O'Neill's father had had a violent temper with her and her siblings growing up, she took on the role of caretaker for him as he got ill in old age. She claims it does not erase his behavior from their childhood, but she still cherishes the time she got to spend with him in his last years, and remembers dearly the happy memories that were shared. She ended up having a lecture inspired by her father, titled, *Wisdom in Nonsense: Invaluable Lessons from My Father*, published by the University of Alberta Press.

#### Highlights of Publishing History:

- two eyes are you sleeping, 1991 (poetry)
- *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, 2006 (novel)
- *The Girl Who Was Saturday Night*, 2014 (novel)
- *Daydreams of Angels*, 2015 (short stories)
- *The Lonely Hearts Hotel*, 2017 (novel)
- *Wisdom in Nonsense: Invaluable Lessons from My Father*, 2018 (nonfiction)
- *St. Jude*, 2000 (film screenplay, debuted at the Toronto Film Festival)

O'Neill has made contributions to *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *This American Life*, CBC Radio, *Rookie Magazine*, *Elle*, *Chatelaine*, the *National Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and *The Walrus*. In 2019 O'Neill was awarded the Writers' Trust Fellowship for her body of work.