

**MARGUERITE YOURCENAR**, author, scholar, and teacher; adopted citizen of Maine and near neighbor from Mount Desert. She has given her life to the pursuit of letters. A daughter of France, born in Belgium, she was educated privately and although she matriculated at the University of Aix, she left to go to Italy to write and study the language. Throughout her life she has traveled extensively, especially in the classical world of which she was later to write so authoritatively. She began to publish in 1929 and has done so steadily ever since. Her bibliography shows more than a score of novels, essays, plays, poems, and translations. One work, however, dominates the rest. It is the *Memoirs of Hadrian*, an imaginative reconstruction of a personality, the times in which he lived, and his life and career in those times. Her achievement is an inspiration, a challenge, and a lesson to the professional scholars of the academic world. In her “Reflections on the Composition” appended to the most recent edition, she describes her method. Her object, she says, has been “to reconstruct” the “world as seen and heard by one man” using not only “factual details” provided by ancient writers, but also “statues, reliefs, inscriptions, and coins.” She has had “one foot in scholarship, the other in magic arts, or, more accurately and without metaphor in that sympathetic magic which operates when one transports oneself, in thought, into another’s body and soul.” Thus she has shown us the second century “with the eyes, soul, and feelings of the second century.” For this she has received many honors: the French Academy Prize, the Page One Award in Literature of the Newspaper Guild of New York, the Doctorate of Literature from Smith College. We joyfully join the many others who sing her praise. For your skill in combining the creative imagination of the artist with the meticulous attention to detail of the scholar and the insistence on essential truth of the philosopher, and because as a productive writer you have shared all this with us and with the world, Bowdoin is proud to include you in the small but select company of her daughters, and as such we honor you today:

*Honoris Causa*, DOCTOR OF LITERATURE