

THE WRITING LIFE

Katharine Anne Porter spent 20 years writing *Ship of Fools*.

Sinclair Lewis labored for 17 years on *Main Street*, taking the manuscript through three complete rewrites.

Margaret Mitchell rewrote the first chapter of *Gone With The Wind* 70 times.

Ernest Hemingway rewrote the last page of *A Farewell to Arms* 39 times.

Plato redrafted the opening sentence of *The Republic* 50 times. The final version gives little indication of the effort: "I walked down to the Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon, the son of Ariston, to make my prayers to the goddess."

Jerzy Kosinski wrote 27 drafts of *Steps*.

Irving Stone's *Lust for Life* was turned down by 17 publishers.

The Ginger Man, by J.P. Donleavy, was refused by 36 publishers in America and 10 in Great Britain.

Auntie Mame, by Patrick Dennis, circulated for five years through the halls of 15 publishers before Vanguard bought it.

The Doctor's Quick Weight Loss Diet by Dr. Irwin Stillman was rejected 16 times before becoming one of the best-selling diet books of all time.

Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*, was declined by more than a dozen publishers. Once published, the book won a Pulitzer Prize.

British novelist John Creasey collected 774 rejection slips before making his first sale. Subsequently he authored 564 books under his own name and 13 aliases.

Mickey Spillane: My speed depends on the state of my bank account. When it's necessary, I can write 5,000 words a day."

Compiled by Jean Bryant