ELIZABETH SPENCER
Born in Carrollton in 1921, Elizabeth Spencer aspired to be a writer early on. After receiving encouragement from writer Eudora Welty, whom she met while attending Belhaven College in Jackson, Spencer obtained a master's degree from Vanderbilt University and began a long career of teaching and writing award-winning fiction. Despite its graphic depiction of racial strife, her third novel, The Voice at the Back Door, set in Mississippi, was well received. Although she would continue "to draw on Southern sources of family and history," she was no longer tied to them and chose to set her next work, The Light in the Piazza, in Italy. It became a popular movie and a highly acclaimed musical and opera. Yet her enduring fondness for her native Carrollton is evident in her 1998 memoir, Landscapes of the Heart. Spencer's works are collected in the distinguished Library of America Series.
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