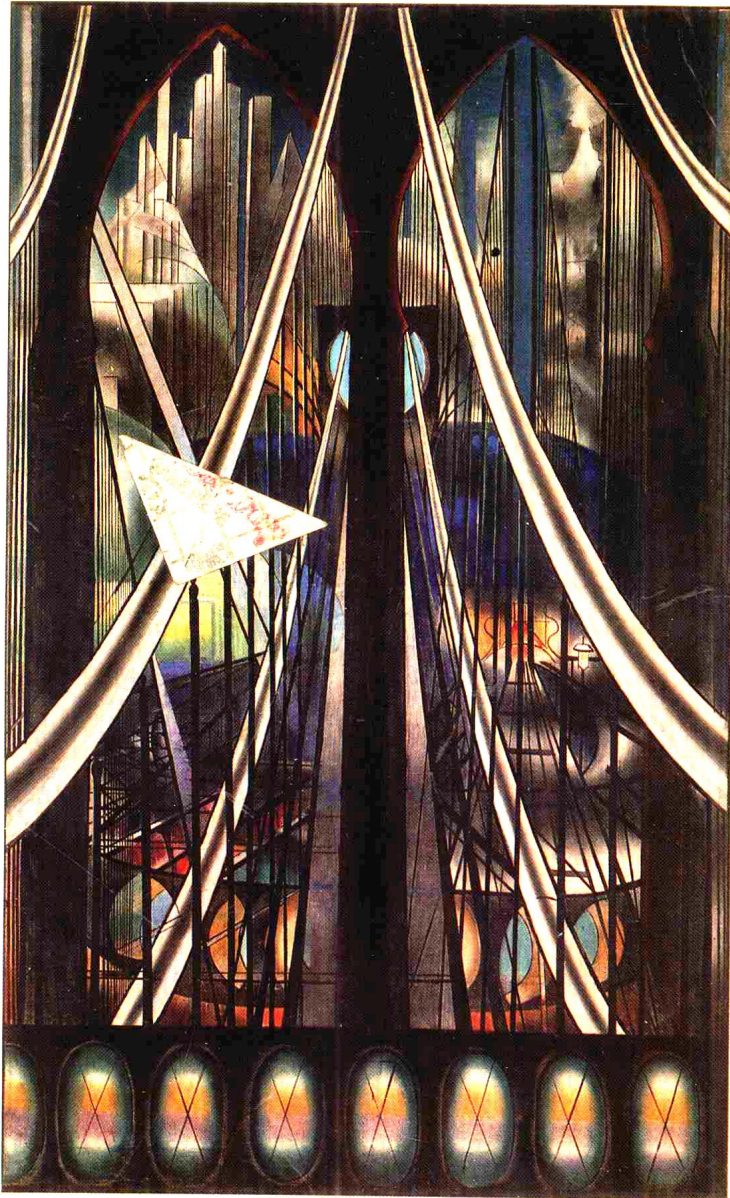


Revised Shorter Edition

# Literature

## THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE



Richard Abcarian and Marvin Klotz, Editors

REVISED SHORTER EDITION

# LITERATURE

## THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

# PREFACE

The wide acceptance of the third edition of *Literature: The Human Experience* has encouraged us to prepare this revised shorter version for instructors who may prefer a more compact volume. Some 900 pages in length, the Revised Shorter Edition should be especially suitable for courses in which the instructor wishes to use the anthology in conjunction with novels, essays, or other materials.

From the regular edition, we have retained five of the eleven plays (including Ingmar Bergman's film script for *The Seventh Seal*), twenty-two stories, and one hundred forty-six poems. In addition, we have included three new stories. The Revised Shorter Edition also retains the several pedagogical features that instructors and students have found useful: a dual organization by theme and genre; questions for students' consideration after many of the selections; appendices on formal and historical considerations, on alternative critical approaches, and on writing about literature; and a glossary of literary terms.

As in the longer edition, the short stories, poems, and plays in this volume represent literary traditions ranging from 400 B.C. to the present and reflect widely diverse cultures. In choosing the selections we were governed by a belief that the first task of an introductory anthology of literature is to engage the reader's interest, to make the experience of literature an immediate and exciting one. A corollary of that belief is our conviction that a genuine interest in literary history or the formal analysis of literature arises out of the experience of being engaged by particular works. Thus, we have selected works not primarily because they illustrate critical definitions or lend themselves to a particular approach but because we find them exciting and believe that students will, too.

The arrangement of the works in five thematic groups—one of which, "Discovery and Creation," is new to this shorter edition—provides opportunities to explore diverse attitudes toward the same powerful human tendencies and experiences and to contrast formal treatments as well. Within each thematic section, the works are arranged by genre—fiction, poetry, drama—chronologically. Each section is introduced by a short essay that examines some of the issues embodied in the works that follow. These essays are deliberately polemical, and, no doubt, readers will sometimes take exception to them. This is all to the good, for we believe that our proper mission as editors is to provide the groundwork for discussion and debate, not to promulgate "truths" for the edification of students.

It may be worthwhile to say a word about the questions—rarely more than two or three—that we have placed after about half of the stories, many of the

poems, and all of the plays. We believe that too often students are prevented from responding to a work as fully as they might because they are immediately asked questions that require them to confront formal problems. But our students have convinced us that certain kinds of questions can be helpful by opening works that might otherwise prove difficult. The questions in this book are intended to serve this purpose. At the end of each of the five thematic sections we have provided a number of general questions, each alluding to several works in the section. We have found these questions especially useful as starting points for student writing.

New to this edition are a number of writing topics, following both individual selections and the five thematic sections. In devising the writing topics, we have been guided by two considerations. First, we have tried to formulate topics that bear some relationship to the discussion questions on the same work. Second, we have attempted to make the topics specific and concrete, so that even if students do not have the benefit of class discussion of the work, they will understand what they are being called upon to do. There is little virtue in a writing assignment that forces students to spend great energy in understanding the assignment itself.

The first appendix, "The Poet and His Craft," presents three poems in both early draft and published versions. A student who compares the two versions of each poem will, we think, gain some insight into the ways in which poems are created.

Although the emphasis throughout this book is on the value of literature as a means to enjoyment and to a better understanding of our own humanity, it is of course true that the fullest appreciation of literary achievement requires a certain facility in formal matters and some acquaintance with literary history as well. The essays "Reading Fiction," "Reading Poetry," and "Reading Drama" acquaint readers with some formal concepts and historical considerations basic to the study of the major genres of literary art. The essay on drama also includes a discussion of some of the less obvious differences between live performance and film art.

In another essay, "Three Critical Approaches: Formalist, Sociological, Psychoanalytic," we develop, for one story and one poem, three critical readings that emphasize different aspects of the works and reflect the diversity of response that may occur when readers bring different expectations and attitudes to literature. Seeing that a variety of critical approaches may all illuminate a work and complement one another helps to free students, we believe, from a timid acquiescence to some "correct" received view and enables them to respond to literature more honestly and openly.

The essay "Writing About Literature" has been revised and expanded for this new edition. Our own experience and that of many other instructors made us realize that students would be served better if the essay were structured according to the major types of writing students are called on to follow rather than, as in the previous edition, according to genre. Thus, we have completely restructured the essay around the three major types of writing: explication, anal-

ysis, and comparison and contrast. Each type is defined and discussed and then illustrated with a student essay. An essay that draws on all three types of writing in a general discussion is also illustrated.

The new structure, however, does not preclude attention to genre. In fact, “Writing About Literature” contains extensive discussions—for each type of writing—of poetry, fiction, and drama. These discussions provide suggested approaches and questions to help students write explication, analysis, and comparison-and-contrast essays for each of the three genres.

We have added, as well, sections on the journal and the summary report. These discussions are intended to complement the sections on the formal essay, illustrating other useful purposes student writing can serve. The section on the journal is designed to encourage students to cultivate the habit of writing by keeping a record of their responses to the works they read. The summary report offers a useful way for students to come to terms with the essential elements of a work.

Finally, we have added to the end of “Writing About Literature” some eighty-five “Suggested Topics for Writing.” The topics address all genres and types of writing. In formulating the topics, we have remained mindful that student writing assignments for an introductory literature course will usually range between 500 and 1,000 words. In addition, we have tried to provide enough variety in the questions both to meet the instructor’s needs and to engage the student’s interest.

The “Glossary of Literary Terms” contains brief excerpts to illustrate the definitions presented there and also makes specific reference to selections in the text.

A great many people have helped us, and among them we would especially like to acknowledge our debt to our colleagues Richard Lid, John Hartzog, Louis Owens, and Benjamin Saltman for their valuable comments and criticism, and to Eve Zarin and Georgette Cok for their careful reading of portions of the manuscript.

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Richard Abcarian  
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# CONTENTS

## Innocence and Experience 4

### FICTION

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804–1864)	
My Kinsman, Major Molineux	7
STEPHEN CRANE (1871–1900)	
The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky	22
JAMES JOYCE (1882–1941)	
Araby	31
ERNEST HEMINGWAY (1898–1961)	
Old Man at the Bridge	36
FRANK O'CONNOR (1903–1966)	
My Oedipus Complex	38
FLANNERY O'CONNOR (1925–1964)	
Good Country People	47

### POETRY

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)	
The Chimney Sweeper	65
The Garden of Love	66
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)	
It Is a Beauteous Evening	66
ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)	
My Last Duchess	67
EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)	
I Felt a Funeral, in My Brain	69
THOMAS HARDY (1840–1928)	
Hap	69
The Ruined Maid	70
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844–1889)	
Spring and Fall	71
A. E. HOUSMAN (1859–1936)	
When I Was One-and-Twenty	72
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–1939)	
Leda and the Swan	72

ROBERT FROST (1874–1963)	
Birches	73
Provide, Provide	74
JOHN PEALE BISHOP (1892–1944)	
Speaking of Poetry	75
STEVIE SMITH (1902–1971)	
To Carry the Child	77
COUNTEE CULLEN (1903–1946)	
Incident	78
PHYLLIS MCGINLEY (1905–1978)	
Country Club Sunday	78
DYLAN THOMAS (1914–1953)	
Fern Hill	79
ALASTAIR REID (b. 1926)	
Curiosity	81
W. D. SNODGRASS (b. 1926)	
April Inventory	82
X. J. KENNEDY (b. 1929)	
First Confession	84
ADRIENNE RICH (b. 1929)	
The Middle-aged	85
PETER MEINKE (b. 1932)	
Advice to My Son	85
ROBERT WALLACE (b. 1932)	
In a Spring Still Not Written Of	86

## DRAMA

SOPHOCLES (496?–406 B.C.)	
Oedipus Rex	89
<i>Questions and Writing Topics</i>	131

# Conformity and Rebellion 132

## FICTION

HERMAN MELVILLE (1819–1891)	
Bartleby the Scrivener	137
FRANZ KAFKA (1883–1924)	
A Hunger Artist	165
JAMES THURBER (1894–1961)	
The Greatest Man in the World	172

RICHARD WRIGHT (1908–1960)	
The Man Who Lived Underground	177
SHIRLEY JACKSON (1919–1965)	
The Lottery	216
HARLAN ELLISON (b. 1934)	
“Repent, Harlequin!” Said the Ticktockman	223

## POETRY

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)	
Sonnet XVII “When I consider how my light is spent”	233
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)	
The World Is Too Much with Us	233
EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)	
I’m Nobody! Who Are You?	234
Much Madness Is Divinest Sense	234
What Soft—Cherubic Creatures	235
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844–1889)	
Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord	235
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–1939)	
Easter 1916	236
EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869–1935)	
Miniver Cheevy	239
PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR (1872–1906)	
We Wear the Mask	240
AMY LOWELL (1874–1925)	
Patterns	240
ROBERT FROST (1874–1963)	
Departmental	243
WALLACE STEVENS (1879–1955)	
Sunday Morning	244
CLAUDE McKAY (1890–1948)	
If We Must Die	248
E. E. CUMMINGS (1894–1962)	
the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls	249
next to of course god america i	249
LANGSTON HUGHES (1902–1967)	
Harlem	250
Same in Blues	250
W. H. AUDEN (1907–1973)	
The Unknown Citizen	251
THEODORE ROETHKE (1908–1963)	
Dolor	252
HENRY REED (b. 1914)	
Naming of Parts	253

GWENDOLYN BROOKS (b. 1917)	
The Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith	254
MAY SWENSON (b. 1919)	
Women	258
HOWARD NEMEROV (b. 1920)	
Boom!	259
ETHERIDGE KNIGHT (b. 1933)	
Hard Rock Returns to Prison from the Hospital for the Criminal	
Insane	260
ROSMARIE WALDROP (b. 1935)	
Confession to Settle a Curse	262
JUDY GRAHN (b. 1940)	
The Marilyn Monroe Poem	263
JOHN LENNON (1940–1980) and PAUL McCARTNEY (b. 1942)	
Eleanor Rigby	264
BOB DYLAN (b. 1941)	
Blowin' in the Wind	266
NIKKI GIOVANNI (b. 1943)	
Dreams	266

## DRAMA

HENRIK IBSEN (1828–1906)	
A Doll's House	269
<i>Questions and Writing Topics</i>	325

# Love and Hate 326

## FICTION

KATE CHOPIN (1851–1904)	
The Storm	333
D. H. LAWRENCE (1885–1930)	
The Horse Dealer's Daughter	337
WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897–1962)	
Dry September	350
IRWIN SHAW (b. 1913)	
The Girls in Their Summer Dresses	359
DORIS LESSING (b. 1919)	
A Man and Two Women	364

## POETRY

### ANONYMOUS

Bonny Barbara Allan 379

### SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503?–1542)

They Flee from Me 380

### CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593)

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love 381

### SIR WALTER RALEGH (1552?–1618)

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd 382

### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Sonnet 18 "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" 383

Sonnet 29 "When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" 383

Sonnet 116 "Let me not to the marriage of true minds" 384

Sonnet 129 "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame" 384

Sonnet 130 "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" 385

Sonnet 138 "When my love swears that she is made of truth" 385

### JOHN DONNE (1572–1631)

The Flea 386

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning 386

### ROBERT HERRICK (1591–1674)

Corinna's Going A-Maying 388

### EDMUND WALLER (1606–1687)

Go, Lovely Rose! 390

### ANDREW MARVELL (1621–1678)

To His Coy Mistress 391

### WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

A Poison Tree 392

### ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796)

A Red, Red Rose 393

### WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing 393

### MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

Dover Beach 394

### EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)

Mine Enemy Is Growing Old 395

### ROBERT FROST (1874–1963)

Fire and Ice 395

The Silken Tent 396

### T. S. ELIOT (1888–1965)

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock 396

### EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892–1950)

Love Is Not All 401

### E. E. CUMMINGS (1894–1962)

if everything happens that can't be done 401

W. H. AUDEN (1907–1973)	
<i>from Five Songs</i>	403
THEODORE ROETHKE (1908–1963)	
I Knew a Woman	403
HELEN SORRELLS (b. 1908)	
To a Child Born in Time of Small War	404
ELIZABETH BISHOP (1911–1979)	
One Art	405
ROBERT HAYDEN (1913–1980)	
Those Winter Sundays	406
ANTHONY HECHT (b. 1922)	
The Dover Bitch	407
DENISE LEVERTOV (b. 1923)	
The Ache of Marriage	408
VASSAR MILLER (b. 1924)	
Regret	408
ANNE SEXTON (1928–1975)	
The Farmer's Wife	409
ADRIENNE RICH (b. 1929)	
Living in Sin	410
TED HUGHES (b. 1930)	
Crow's First Lesson	410
SYLVIA PLATH (1932–1963)	
Daddy	411
MARGARET ATWOOD (b. 1939)	
The Accident Has Occurred	414

## DRAMA

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)	
Othello	417
<i>Questions and Writing Topics</i>	509

# Discovery and Creation 510

## FICTION

HENRY JAMES (1843–1916)	
The Real Thing	517
E. B. WHITE (b. 1899)	
The Second Tree from the Corner	536

GRACE PALEY (b. 1922)	
A Conversation with My Father	541

## POETRY

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)	
The Tyger	547
JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)	
On First Looking into Chapman's Homer	548
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)	
Ulysses	548
WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)	
<i>from</i> Song of Myself (11)	550
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844–1889)	
The Windhover	551
Pied Beauty	552
A. E. HOUSMAN (1859–1936)	
Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff	553
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–1939)	
Adam's Curse	555
WALLACE STEVENS (1879–1955)	
Peter Quince at the Clavier	556
MARIANNE MOORE (1887–1972)	
Poetry	559
ROBERT FRANCIS (b. 1901)	
Pitcher	560
OGDEN NASH (1902–1971)	
Very Like a Whale	560
W. H. AUDEN (1907–1973)	
Musée des Beaux Arts	562
DYLAN THOMAS (1914–1953)	
In My Craft or Sullen Art	562
LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI (b. 1919)	
Constantly Risking Absurdity	563
RICHARD WILBUR (b. 1921)	
The Writer	564
MICHAEL HAMBURGER (b. 1924)	
A Poet's Progress	565
JOHN HOLLANDER (b. 1929)	
Adam's Task	566
JUNE JORDAN (b. 1936)	
A Poem About Intelligence for My Brothers and Sisters	567
NIKKI GIOVANNI (b. 1943)	
For Saundra	569

VICTOR HERNANDEZ CRUZ (b. 1949)	
Today Is a Day of Great Joy	570

## DRAMA

BERNARD SHAW (1856–1950)	
Pygmalion	573
<i>Questions and Writing Topics</i>	653

# The Presence of Death 654

## FICTION

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809–1849)	
The Masque of the Red Death	659
LEO TOLSTOY (1828–1910)	
The Death of Iván Ilých	664
AMBROSE BIERCE (1842–1914?)	
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge	706
KATHERINE ANNE PORTER (1890–1980)	
The Jilting of Granny Weatherall	713
BERNARD MALAMUD (b. 1914)	
Idiots First	721

## POETRY

ANONYMOUS	
Edward	729
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)	
Sonnet 73 “That time of year thou mayest in me behold”	731
JOHN DONNE (1572–1631)	
Death, Be Not Proud	731
THOMAS GRAY (1716–1771)	
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard	732
GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1778–1824)	
The Destruction of Sennacherib	736
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)	
Ozymandias	737
JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)	
Ode to a Nightingale	738
Ode on a Grecian Urn	741
When I Have Fears	743

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)	
Growing Old	743
EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)	
After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes	744
I Heard a Fly Buzz—When I Died	745
Apparently With No Surprise	746
A. E. HOUSMAN (1859–1936)	
To an Athlete Dying Young	746
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–1939)	
Sailing to Byzantium	747
EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869–1935)	
Richard Cory	748
Mr. Flood's Party	749
ROBERT FROST (1874–1963)	
After Apple-Picking	751
'Out, Out—'	752
Design	753
WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS (1883–1963)	
Tract	753
JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888–1974)	
Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter	755
WILFRED OWEN (1893–1918)	
Dulce et Decorum Est	756
E. E. CUMMINGS (1894–1962)	
nobody loses all the time	757
W. H. AUDEN (1907–1973)	
In Memory of W. B. Yeats	758
THEODORE ROETHKE (1908–1963)	
Elegy for Jane	760
RICHARD WRIGHT (1908–1960)	
Between the World and Me	761
DYLAN THOMAS (1914–1953)	
Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night	762
RANDALL JARRELL (1914–1965)	
The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner	763
CATHERINE DAVIS (b. 1924)	
After a Time	764
MAXINE KUMIN (b. 1925)	
Woodchucks	764
ALLEN GINSBERG (b. 1926)	
To Aunt Rose	765
EDWIN BROCK (b. 1927)	
Five Ways to Kill a Man	767
W. S. MERWIN (b. 1927)	
For the Anniversary of My Death	768

YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO (b. 1933)	
People	769

## DRAMA

INGMAR BERGMAN (b. 1918)	
The Seventh Seal	771
<i>Questions and Writing Topics</i>	815

# Appendices

## THE POET'S CRAFT 817

WILLIAM BLAKE	
London	818
London (notebook version, 1793)	818
WILFRED OWEN	
The Last Laugh	819
Last Words (early version of The Last Laugh)	820
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS	
The Second Coming	820
The Second Coming (first full draft)	821

## READING FICTION 823

Studying Literature	824
Fiction and Reality	825
The Methods of Fiction	827

## READING POETRY 832

The Words of Poetry	835
Imagery	837
Figurative Language	838
Symbol	839
Music	842

## READING DRAMA 845

Staging	845
Drama and Society	850