

The Norton Anthology

# AMERICAN LITERATURE



*Shorter Fourth Edition*

# The Norton Anthology of American Literature

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SHORTER  
FOURTH EDITION

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## Preface to the Shorter Fourth Edition

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This Shorter Fourth Edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* distills in a single volume the full resources of the two parent volumes. It is designed to serve either a short course in American literature or one in which a teacher wishes to supplement a “core” anthology by a number of individual texts. The book retains the major innovations that have found favor with teachers and students in three earlier editions, but also introduces changes in response to useful suggestions by those who have used the anthology in the classroom. Like other Norton anthologies, it is the product of an ongoing collaboration between users and editors.

In response to significant changes in critical interest, the Shorter Fourth Edition introduces two major innovations. An entirely new section, Literature to 1620, gathers the writings of encounter—the journals and letters of the first European explorers. Texts such as Columbus’s *Letter to Luis de Santangel* and Thomas Harriot’s *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* bear witness to the natural wonders of the New World, a tradition that has remained strong in American writing ever since. At the same time, the literature of encounter tells of violence and devastation; *The Relation of Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca* recounts the brutal treatment of the Native Americans by the “Christian slavers”; and the writings of the soldier-entrepreneur John Smith (moved to this section with other chroniclers of exploration) describe the harsh conditions of life in the early settlement of Jamestown.

Literature to 1620 also introduces the second major innovation in the Shorter Fourth Edition—the greatly increased attention to Native American oral and written traditions. The first of three new sections of oral materials, *Stories of the Beginning of the World*, includes creation stories from the Iroquois and the Pima. Headnotes here give special attention to the political, cultural, and linguistic complexities of transcription and translation.

Changes in critical and classroom interest have also led to innovations in every period of the anthology.

*Early American Literature 1620–1820.* Notable additions are five letters by Phillis Wheatley that reveal the strength of her opposition to slavery and deepen our understanding of her poetry. Countering the myth of the pastoral New World, a selection from Crèvecoeur’s *Letter X, On Snakes; and on the Humming Bird*, shows a view of Nature as distinctly “red in tooth and claw.”

*American Literature 1820–1865.* The additions to this great period enlarge

instructors' options by expanding the kinds of texts offered. A chapter from William Apress's biographical work, *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe*, asserts that those who profess Christianity must also uphold racial equality. Six chapters from Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* convey the drama of Linda Brent's bondage and escape, as well as Jacobs's skillful use of melodrama in the cause of abolition. New too is John Greenleaf Whittier's stirring abolitionist poem *Massachusetts to Virginia*. The period 1820–1865 also includes notable additions to two major authors. Freshly collated from manuscript is Walt Whitman's poem-sequence *Live Oak, with Moss*, celebrating sexual "adhesiveness" of man for man. These poems are here restored to Whitman's first and most personal ordering. The headnote to Emily Dickinson has been entirely rewritten and appropriately expanded; her poetry has been enriched with several new poems that reveal both her growing self-awareness as a poet and her sense of connection to other poets and writers—Shakespeare, the Brownings, the Brontës.

*American Literature 1865–1914*. Kate Chopin's evocative *At the 'Cadian Ball* now provides a companion piece for *The Storm*. Building on the Native American works earlier in the volume, two new sections of oral materials—Native American Oratory and Native American Chants and Songs—provide a rich introduction to several complex forms. While the selections from *The Night Chant* and the Chippewa and Ghost Dance songs may be read simply as poems in translation, to underscore their essential role as *performances* we accompany the texts with music notation and a period drawing illustrating the dance.

*American Literature between the Wars 1914–1945*. The outpouring between the wars of political poetry by women and African-American poets, eclipsed in the academy by High Modernism, is now significantly recovered with the inclusion of Muriel Rukeyser and Angelina Weld Grimké. The prominent imagist Amy Lowell is newly anthologized. Poems by Marianne Moore, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Langston Hughes have been reselected to better show these poets' range and variety.

*American Prose since 1945*. A major figure in the Native American Renaissance, N. Scott Momaday is newly represented with selections chosen to show the "arc" of *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Also newly included is Maxine Hong Kingston's *No Name Woman*, an autobiographical essay exploring family tragedy and its repercussions through the generations.

*American Poetry since 1945*. As the introduction to this section observes "What best characterizes the world of contemporary American poetry is its pluralism and the power of its best poets to absorb a variety of influences." This widely praised section has been updated with new poems by Gwendolyn Brooks, Adrienne Rich, and Rita Dove. Also added is a new poet: the vibrant and contemporary Li-Young Lee.

*Teaching with The Norton Anthology of American Literature: A Guide for Instructors*, by Marjorie Pryse, makes available to instructors teaching notes and suggested essay topics and exam questions for works in the anthology, as well as class plans for a variety of approaches to the survey course. Information for ordering the *Guide for Instructors* (in either print or disk versions) may be obtained from the publisher.

It will be clear from the foregoing that, in compiling the Shorter Fourth Edition, we have also held fast to two other important principles. First, teach-

ers are offered more authors and more selections than they will have time to teach. Such copiousness is designed to allow flexibility within any course and variety from year to year. Second, on the principle of making the anthology self-sufficient—thereby minimizing the frustration of having to teach excerpts and eliminating the need for costly supplements—we include many long works in their entirety, all of them notable achievements in American literature. These range from Emerson's *Nature* to Clemens's *Huckleberry Finn* to O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Readers already familiar with the anthology will have noticed that the present edition retains the larger trim size of its predecessor, which allows the volume, even in its middle section, to open out and stay flat. It retains, too, the page design and line-length that allow maximum ease of reading. The format is that of a book to be read for pleasure; the text is inviting to the eye, and the special paper makes it possible to keep each volume to a size and weight that allow it to be easily carried to a classroom.

Similarly, this edition continues to incorporate the editorial features that have established a standard in the classroom. The introductions, headnotes, and footnotes are concise but full and are designed to give the student the information needed, without preempting the interpretive function of the student or of the instructor. The Selected Bibliographies at the end of the volume provide guides to further readings and research and complete the self-sufficiency of the anthology, which permits each of its selections to be read, understood, and placed in historical context without dependence on reference books.

The editors have taken scrupulous care to represent the most accurate available version of each work. Indeed, several of the major texts—Franklin's *Autobiography* and some of the materials by Clemens—were edited from manuscript. Among the standard editions used in the Shorter Fourth Edition are those of Philip Barbour for John Smith, John Bierhorst for *The Night Chant*, Louis Martz for H. D., and Marc Simon for Hart Crane.

Our policy has been to reprint each text in the form that accords, as far as it is possible to determine, to the intention of its author. There is one exception: we have modernized most spellings and (very sparingly) the punctuation in the sections Literature to 1620 and Early American Literature 1620–1820, on the principle that nonfunctional features such as archaic spellings and typography pose unnecessary problems for beginning students. We have, however, since it is a new edition from the manuscript, left Franklin's *Autobiography* unchanged. For the convenience of the student, we have used square brackets to indicate titles supplied by the editors and have, whenever a portion of a text has been omitted, indicated that omission with three asterisks. To ensure the accuracy of all texts, the Shorter Fourth Edition has been proofread in its entirety against copy text.

The editors of this anthology were selected on the basis of their expertness in their individual areas. They combine respect for the best that has been thought and said about literature with alertness (as participants, as well as observers) to the altering interests of contemporary scholarship and criticism. Each editor was given ultimate responsibility for his or her period, but all collaborated in the final enterprise. New contributors to the Shorter Fourth Edition, Wayne Franklin edited Literature to 1620, and Arnold Krupat edited the Native American oral materials, as well as the Apess selection. In the

1820–1865 section, Ronald Gottesman prepared the texts and introductions for Lincoln, Stowe, and Douglass; and Nina Baym prepared the text and introduction for Harriet Jacobs.

In preparing these volumes, we have incurred obligations to hundreds of teachers throughout the country who have answered our questions; we take this opportunity to thank them warmly for their invaluable assistance. Those teachers who prepared detailed critiques or who offered special help in selecting or preparing texts are listed under Acknowledgments, on a separate page. The editors would like to express appreciation for their assistance to Kevin Affonso, Olivia Banner, Mark Canner, Daniel Chiasson, Joseph Coulombe, Sarah Hurley, Sharon Lee, Ted Loos, Thomas Osmond, Rilla Park, Heddy Richter, Danny Rose, Beth Shube, and Stellene Vollandes.

The publisher's editor, in turn, would like to express her special thanks to Marian Johnson, development editor of this Shorter Fourth Edition. She would also like to thank her coworkers Allen Clawson, Virginia Creeden, Anna Karvellas, Candace Levy, Polly Mancini, Mike McIver, Diane O'Connor, Hugh O'Neill, Nancy Palmquist, and Tara Parmiter. We also wish to acknowledge our debt to George P. Brockway, former president and chairman at Norton, who invented this anthology; to M. H. Abrams (Cornell), Norton's advisor on English texts, and to the late John G. Benedict and the late Barry K. Wade, anthology editors and mentors whose contribution is and will be ongoing. All have helped us to create an anthology that has been called "the standard of comparison for all American-literature survey texts."



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