

Margaret Ferguson

Mary Jo Salter

Jon Stallworthy

Fifth Edition

The NORTON

ANTHOLOGY *of*

POETRY

The Norton Anthology of Poetry

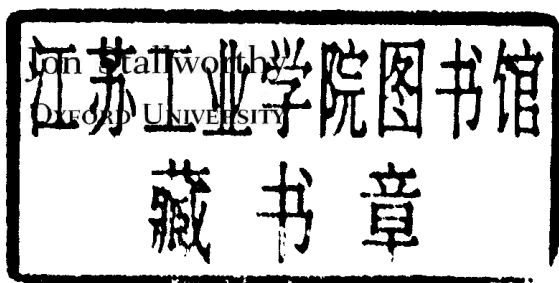
FIFTH EDITION

Margaret Ferguson

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Mary Jo Salter

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE



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Preface to the Fifth Edition

What is a poem? The definitions offered over the centuries are almost as numerous as the examples in this book. Although no two people may settle on the qualities all poems share, it might not be foolish to say that the best definition of poetry encompasses all definitions—even those that contradict each other. Poetry, after all, encourages us to embrace paradox and contradiction, the unexpected, the never-thought-of (and also, paradoxically, the universal, the shared, the familiar). Poetry began as song and continues as song; it is usually best appreciated when spoken or sung by a human voice. Since the advent of writing, however, the act of reading a poem on the page has added new dimensions to our experience. In these pages, we necessarily feature the written pleasures of poetry—even in those poems that were meant originally as song. What all these poems share, we hope, is something in the manner of their telling that cannot be achieved any better way. The best poems, too, make a claim on our memory. W. H. Auden wrote that “of the many definitions of poetry, the simplest is still the best: ‘memorable speech.’” Many poems in this book have been part of English-speaking culture for centuries, while the newest poems here might well lodge in readers’ memories in the future.

This Fifth Edition of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* brings together more than eighteen hundred such records from “the round earth’s imagined corners.” We have set out to provide readers with a wide and deep sampling of the best poetry written in English. That previous editions have succeeded in this endeavor, within the limits of the pages available in a single volume, seems manifest in the acceptance of those editions by teachers and students alike. But as our friend and advisor M. H. Abrams has said in another context, “a vital literary culture is always on the move,” both in the appearance of new works and in the altering response to existing texts: hence a Fifth Edition, which broadens and refines that cultural tradition. We believe that the vitality of our literary culture has been demonstrated by this collaboration.

In assembling the new edition, we have aimed to respond to the practical criticism and informed suggestions provided by teachers who have used the anthology. Our goal has been to make the anthology an even better teaching tool for their classes. In response to instructors’ requests, a number of important works by major poets have been added to the Fifth Edition, among them a selection from *Beowulf*, in Seamus Heaney’s prize-winning translation; Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”; Spenser, “The Shepherdes Calendar: Aprill” and book 1, canto 2 of *The Faerie Queene*; Shakespeare, ten additional sonnets; Milton, from Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*; Wroth, seven additional sonnets; Swift, “Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift”; Keats, “Lamia”; Eliot, “Little Gidding” and “The Hollow Men.” We have worked toward a balance between the older and the newer. Instructors committed

to teaching the rich diversity—of forms and techniques as well as historical and geographic range—of English-language poetry in the twentieth century will welcome the Fifth Edition's increased attention to world poetry in English as well as the greater range of American voices. Among the seventeen poets newly included are Richard Wright, Weldon Kees, Robyn Sarah, Charles Bernstein, Anne Carson, Vikram Seth, and Simon Armitage. In addition to expanding representation, we have reconsidered, and in some instances reselected, the work of poets retained from earlier editions. Among the poets reselected are John Ashbery, Adrienne Rich, Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, Michael Ondaatje, Yusef Komunyakaa, Agha Shahid Ali, Jorie Graham, Carol Ann Duffy, and Li-Young Li.

The vernacular tradition, in which the poet “Anon” has spoken eloquently over the centuries, is brought forward from medieval lyrics and Elizabethan and Jacobean poems to African American spirituals and popular ballads of the twentieth century. Teachers can trace the history of the epic by comparing openings and selections from *Beowulf*, *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, Killigrew's (unfinished) *Alexandreis*, Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, and Wordsworth's *Prelude*. The tradition of light verse, too, can be traced from Lewis Carroll, W. S. Gilbert, and Edward Lear to Ogden Nash and Dorothy Parker to Wendy Cope, James Fenton, and John Updike.

We continue to expand opportunities for teaching intertextual “dialogues” among poets: the addition of Donne's “A Hymn to God the Father,” for instance, allows that poem to be read with Jonson's hymn of the same name. Among the pairs entirely new to this edition: Elizabeth Bishop's “Casabianca” responds to Felicia Dorothea Hemans's poem of that title, which was, as Bishop knew, one of the most often taught and recited poems of the nineteenth century. Also new are Aphra Behn's “The Disappointment” and John Wilmot, earl of Rochester's “The Imperfect Enjoyment,” which together form a dialogue about impotence. Other poetic dialogues present English-language responses to foreign sources, which may be secular—a Petrarchan sonnet, for instance, such as the one rendered in English by Wyatt (“Whoso List to Hunt”) and by Spenser (*Amoretti* 67)—or biblical: we now include four versions of Psalms 58 and 114, ranging from Mary Sidney's to Christopher Smart's. Some poetic conversations present different perspectives on culturally fraught issues: a set of eighteenth-century poems on “spleen”—a malady strikingly like the one we call depression today—includes texts by Anne Finch, Alexander Pope, and Matthew Green; a newly augmented cluster of poems on the meaning of the color black includes Edward Herbert's “Sonnet of Black Beauty,” Mary Wroth's sonnet 22 (“Like to the Indians”), Henry King's “The Boy's Answer to the Blackmoor,” and Phillis Wheatley's “On Being Brought from Africa to America.” We continue to emphasize call-and-response patterns that extend across periods: our selection from William Cowper's *The Task* includes the lines that inspired part of Coleridge's “Frost at Midnight”; and we invite readers to consider Marlowe's “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” with Raleigh's “The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd,” then both of these poems with C. Day Lewis's elegiac, war-shocked “Two Songs,” which reprises them as well as Jean Elliot's “The Flowers of the Forest.” In turn, Elliot's and Lewis's poems may be set in dialogue with Pete Seeger's modern ballad “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” To bring these

potential dialogues to readers' attention, we have provided a number of cross-referencing annotations and expanded the discussion of intertextual pairs and groups in the Course Guide.

The Fifth Edition includes not merely the lyric and the epigrammatic but instead the entire range of poetic genres in English. Among the many longer poems are Aemilia Lanyer's "The Description of Cooke-ham" and Richard Howard's "Nikolaus Mardruz to his Master Ferdinand, Count of Tyrol, 1565," as well as teachable excerpts from John Skelton's "Phillip Sparrow" and "Colin Clout," Charlotte Smith's "Beachy Head," Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, William Carlos Williams's "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower," and James Merrill's *The Changing Light at Sandover*. Although it is impossible to include all of *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Prelude*, *Song of Myself*, or *The Dream Songs*, readers will find representative and self-sufficient selections from each of these works.

Three other features within the anthology facilitate its usefulness in the classroom. An indispensable aid in helping students become better readers and interpreters of poetry, Margaret Ferguson's new essay, "Poetic Syntax," addresses a perennial stumbling block—how to recognize, describe, analyze, and appreciate syntactic ambiguity in English poetry. Among the "types of ambiguity" (to borrow William Empson's phrase) discussed in the essay are those involving parts of speech, elisions, and punctuation, as well as the difficulties that the poet's traditional license to invert normal English word order can create for readers. Jon Stallworthy's essay, "Versification," has been selectively expanded to offer clearer explanations of rhyme, plus more attention to forms such as prose poetry, found poetry, and shaped poetry and to the metrics of Old and Middle English and Renaissance verse. In addition, the appendix of biographical sketches has been updated, streamlined, and cross-referenced to the individual poets.

Editorial Procedures

The order is chronological, poets appearing according to their dates of birth and their poems according to dates of publication in volume form (or estimated dates of composition in the case of Old and Middle English poets). The publication date is printed at the end of each poem, and to the right; when two dates are printed, they indicate published versions that differ in an important way. Dates on the left, when given, are those of composition. Many of our texts are modernized to help readers, but we continue an ongoing project of remarking editorial decisions in annotations, to let teachers and students consider issues pertaining to the materiality and complex histories of many poems in the anthology.

Annotation in the Fifth Edition has been thoroughly revised. In keeping with recent developments in editing, we have introduced notes that mention significant textual variants. These are intended to spark classroom discussion about poems whose multiple versions challenge the idea of textual "authority." We have added many notes that provide contextual information and clarify archaisms and allusions; however, as in previous editions, we mini-

mize commentary that is interpretive rather than, in a limited sense, explanatory. As further help with teaching poetic syntax, we have added notes that discuss syntactical difficulties.

Marginal glosses for archaic, dialect, or unfamiliar words have been reconsidered and, for many poems, increased in number. 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.

Instructors have long made inventive use of the rich intertextuality of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Three supplemental resources—two in print and one online—expand the possibilities for teachers who wish to convey how poems speak to each other across time, place, and tradition through literal borrowings, form, theme, cultural concern, and conventions. *Teaching with The Norton Anthology of Poetry: A Guide for Instructors*, by Tyler Hoffman, makes available to teachers varied reading lists that help shape a course or courses along a number of lines—according to form, figurative language, traditions and countertraditions, and topics—and to establish relationships among poets and poems of different genres, periods, and concerns. Also for instructors, *Teaching Poetry: A Handbook of Exercises for Large and Small Classes*, by Allan J. Gedalof, offers innovative ideas and exercises for structuring a class centered on performance and discussion. Instructors should visit www.wwnorton.com for further information about obtaining these materials. For students, a new Web site, *The Norton Poetry Workshop Online* (www.wwnorton.com/nap), prepared by James F. Knapp (based on his innovative *Norton Poetry Workshop* CD-ROM), contains texts and recordings of thirty of the most-taught poems from the anthology, supported by a rich array of multimedia, exercises, and study aids.

We are indebted to our predecessors, the editors emeriti of *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, whose presence on the title page signals their ongoing contribution, and to M. H. Abrams, advisor to the Norton English list, for his wise and ready counsel. We also thank the staff at Norton who helped this book come into being: Julia Reidhead used her remarkable resources of energy, intelligence, and good humor to keep the book on course; Diane O'Connor guided the book through production; Erin Dye gracefully facilitated communications and meetings; Nancy Rodwan and Margaret Gorenstein handled the massive task of securing permissions; and Eileen Connell capably oversaw the interrelated projects of the Web site and the Course Guide. Our development editor, Kurt Wildermuth, paid attention to (and in many cases perfected) the book's "minute particulars" in ways that William Blake would have admired. Kurt also kept a steady eye on the book's larger shape and primary goal: to bring English-language poems originating in different times and places to modern readers—who will, we hope, find pleasure within these covers.

MARGARET FERGUSON
MARY JO SALTER
JON STALLWORTHY

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