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VOLUME II

Realism to the Present

Part 1

ANTHOLOG AMERICAN LITERATURE

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Preface

Anthology of American Literature originally provided a generous collection of writings significant in American literary history. The editors selected works ranging from the Colonial beginnings of American literature to the present. Literary merit, importance in the growth of American literary themes and ideas, and power to elicit response from the modern reader formed the standards of choice. Now, after six years of classroom use, the standards are confirmed. In this second edition they apply to an even more generous representation of this nation's literary past and present.

The anthology offers a proportionately large sampling of authors of major prominence. Authors of lesser magnitude are represented by their most noteworthy achievements. In most instances the editors have omitted peripheral writings—letters, extracts from journals, and the like—that are mainly valuable as background to the writer and his times. Such material, however interesting to the specialist, can be included in the anthology only at the expense of some primary work of greater importance to a literary survey. If the reader begins by sampling the best of everything, future studies in depth will be the richer for the experience.

In the first edition the editors included as many full length works as the physical dimensions of the volumes allowed. Volume I of that edition contained the entire texts of Franklin's *Autobiography*, Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, Melville's *Billy Budd* and *Benito Cereno*, Thoreau's *Walden*, and Emerson's *Nature*. Volume II included Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, James's *Daisy Miller*, O'Neill's *Hairy Ape*, Bellow's *Seize the Day*, Jones's *Dutchman*, and Albee's *Zoo Story*. The completely redesigned second edition accommodates all these selections with the addition of Cooper's *Prairie*, Tyler's *Contrast*, and Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener* to Volume I, and of William's *Glass Menagerie* and Roth's *Goodbye Columbus* to Volume II. The entire process of revision, in fact, has consisted more of the pleasures of adding than the grief of cutting. Among the expansions not mentioned in the list of complete long works are a sampling of the early humorists Longstreet, Thorpe, and G. W. Harris. The genre of the short story is augmented by "A New England Nun" by Freeman, "A White Heron" by Jewett, "Belles Demoiselles Plantation" by Cable, "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Bierce, "Some Like Them Cold" by Lardner, "Only the Dead Know Brooklyn" and "The Far and the Near" by Wolfe, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by Thurber, and "How I Contemplated the World from the Detroit House of Correction and Began My Life Over Again" by Oates. Poetry, too, has received

many additions, including substantial increases in the representation of Dickinson, Frost, and Cummings and the inclusion for the first time of the poets Berryman and Ammons. This list by no means exhausts the features of the second edition, but it suggests the character of the rest.

Responses to inquiries widely circulated among scholars and teachers produced little argument for a change in distribution of works between Volume I and Volume II. Frederick Douglass now appears in Volume I instead of in Volume II, but other selections are undisturbed, including the ones for Walt Whitman that conclude the anthology in Volume I and, repeated in full, commence the collection in Volume II. The consensus of those consulted on the revision of the anthology clearly favored the retention of this flexible arrangement.

As in the previous edition, writers and their works follow in a generally chronological order. In deciding on one standard text from among the many editions available, the editors have selected, whenever possible, that edition most respected by modern scholars. The text reproduced is identified following each author's headnote. The numerous footnotes informing the reader and explaining the text are as exact and thorough as possible, yet concise enough not to distract the reader or interfere with the text's right to speak for itself. Spelling and punctuation have, in some cases, been made consistent and modernized to correct obvious errors, to avoid awkwardness, and to clarify passages that might otherwise be obscure.

An editorial excision of less than one paragraph is indicated by an ellipsis thus: . . . ; excisions of a paragraph or more are indicated by a centered ellipsis, thus:

For each author and for each of the five literary periods, brief introductory notes summarize historical and critical information. The date on the left immediately following each selection indicates the date of composition, when known; dates on the right indicate the date or dates of publication. All texts, headnotes, footnotes, and dates carried over from the first edition have been carefully reviewed and corrected in the second edition. The publisher and the editors are grateful to the many readers who brought typographic errors to light.

George McMichael of California State University, Hayward, prepared the manuscript of *Anthology of American Literature*, second edition; Frederick Crews of The University of California, Berkeley, J. C. Levenson of The University of Virginia, Leo Marx of Amherst College, and David E. Smith of Hampshire College reviewed the entire second edition as they did the first. Their suggestions have improved the finished work. Richard P. Adams of Tulane University, who contributed to the previous edition, died before plans for the second edition were laid. His valuable help was sorely missed when the job of revising began, but his loss is a matter of greater and more general sorrow.

The publisher and editors are particularly grateful to the following persons for comprehensive evaluations of the content and commentary of the original edition:

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THE PUBLISHER

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