

# THE RIVERSIDE ANTHOLOGY OF LITERATURE

DOUGLAS HUNT

University of Missouri

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##### SHORT FICTION

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(Acknowledgments continue on p. 2139)

# PREFACE

Anthologies can be built on a number of principles: they can be designed as collections of great works that have withstood the test of time, reflections of the anthologist's tastes, explorations of a theme, or overviews of literary history. *The Riverside Anthology* is all of these things to some degree, but principally it aims to be a book that gives students the tools to develop independent judgments, tastes, and enthusiasms about literature. In short, this is a textbook that aims to make students less dependent on textbooks.

We cannot ask students to develop independent judgments with an anthology that raises no eyebrows and challenges no assumptions. Therefore, *The Riverside Anthology* contains a very broad selection of works: the Anglo-American tradition is well represented, but there is also a healthy representation of writers from Europe, Latin America, and Africa; the great authors of the past are well represented, but there is also a generous representation of authors so contemporary that no one can know whether they will have a place in literary history.

If students are to form their own judgments about literature, they should not have the textbook writer's judgments thrust on them at every turn. One of my favorite stories about the way literature ought ideally to be presented involves Sir Joshua Reynolds, the eighteenth-century painter, who, having nothing to do one evening, picked up a book by an author unknown to him and leaned against a mantelpiece to leaf through it. The book, Samuel Johnson's *Life of Savage*, "seized his attention so strongly that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed." I doubt that Reynolds could have had this experience if the *Life of Savage* had appeared in a textbook as an illustration of a textbook writer's generalizations about the use of setting as an aid to characterization. The important discoveries about literature come to us as surprises.

The apparatus in *The Riverside Anthology* aims to prepare the reader to be surprised. The elements of literature are discussed (often in lesson-length essays) in the Handbook of Literature and in the introductions to the three genres; but this apparatus is separated from the works themselves, so that the story, poem, or play is not dulled by explication. The form of the book makes it clear that one learns about literature primarily by reading it and only secondarily by reading what a textbook has to say about it. A good deal of the commentary about literature is made by the authors themselves, in the "counterpoints" that follow the works. These counterpoints some-

times give one writer's view of another, sometimes a writer's comment on the underpinnings of his or her own work. Collectively, they provide an interesting and varied picture of how writers view their art, a picture that raises provocative questions.

Because writing about literature is so crucial a way of learning about it, the chapter on this subject shows one interpreter's struggle to come to grips with a prose poem, first in an informal journal entry, then in a draft and revision of a short essay, then in a research paper. The instructor's *Guide to The Riverside Anthology* offers over 350 questions appropriate for journal writing, short essays, or class discussion. Each question is "answered" with an essay of 200 to 500 words, intended to show where the question is likely to lead a student who pursues it.

Listed after each work is the earliest date of publication we could confirm; works published posthumously, however, are followed by the generally recognized date of composition. For translated works we have given the date of the first publication in the original language, followed by the date of the English translation we are printing. In glossing the works themselves, we have aimed to give only the information needed to make them accessible: words easily findable in the dictionary are not glossed, nor is every potentially unfamiliar reference.

For their remarkable work on the *Guide*, I thank and salute Melody Daily and W. Raymond Smith of the University of Missouri. For excellent help in research, in drafting portions of the handbook, and in writing most of the biographical sketches of the authors, I owe a great deal to Carolyn Perry, also of the University of Missouri. Marcia Sankey was tenacious in searching out dates of publication; Glenn Hopp (Howard Payne University) found useful material on dramatists; Mary Weaks (University of Missouri) helped pinpoint difficult references in several contemporary poems. For useful reviews of the work in progress, I want to thank Michael Allen, The College of Wooster; Ray Anschel, Normandale Community College; Peter Baker, Southern Connecticut State University; Patricia Bizzell, College of The Holy Cross; Irene Brenalvirez, Nassau Community College; Barbara T. Christian, University of California, Berkeley; James V. Catano, Tulane University; Robert Coleman, Palomar College; John A. R. Dick, University of Texas at El Paso; Mary Fonseca, Santa Monica College; C. J. Gianakaris, Western Michigan University; Robert D. Habich, Ball State University; Kevin J. Harty, La Salle University; Kathleen Hickok, Iowa State University; David Himber, St. Petersburg Junior College; Bert G. Hornback, The University of Michigan; Jill Levenson, Trinity College of Canada; Marjorie Lewis, Texas Christian University; Shirley Lim, Westchester Community College; Paul Mariani, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Michelle A. Massé, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; Paul A. Parrish, Texas A&M University; Compton Rees, The University of Connecticut; Kate Ronald, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Carol J. Singley, Swarthmore College; Cheryl Walker, Scripps College.

Houghton Mifflin, if it will not blush at being praised in its own print, should be thanked for sparing no effort to bring outstanding contemporary writers into *The Riverside Anthology*. Finally, I remain grateful to my editors for their great discernment, intelligence, and perseverance.

DOUG HUNT

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