

An Introduction to
LITERATURE
Expanded Edition



Sylvan Barnet
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An Introduction to
LITERATURE

Expanded Edition
Fiction/Poetry/Drama

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Cover Design: PC & F, Inc.
Cover Illustration: Vincent van Gogh, *Oleanders*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Loeb, 1962. (62.24) Photograph by Malcolm Varon.
Photo Researcher: Michelle E. Ryan
Production Manager: Kewal Sharma
Compositor: ComCom Division of Haddon Craftsmen, Inc.
Printer and Binder: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company
Cover Printer: The Lehigh Press, Inc.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE, Expanded Edition

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

An Introduction to literature / edited by Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, William Burto. — Expanded ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-673-52330-6. — ISBN 0-673-52331-4 (free copy)

1. Literature—Collections. I. Barnet, Sylvan. II. Berman, Morton. III. Burto, William.

PN6014.I498 1993

808-dc20

93-21139

CIP

Preface

This book is a hardcover expanded version of the tenth edition of *An Introduction to Literature*. When an anthology has gone through ten editions, readers of a new version may wonder if the editors will ever get the book right. But of course we are not aiming at a standing target; the body of interesting literature continually changes, and so do the desires of instructors and students. Unlike its predecessors, this is a book for the 1990s.

About half of the selections in this edition are works that for many decades—in some cases even for centuries—have given readers great pleasure. Writers such as Shakespeare, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Kate Chopin have stood the test of time, including the test of today's students and teachers in introductory courses. The other half is contemporary material, some of it by writers who established their reputations a couple of decades ago (for instance, John Updike and Alice Walker), but much of it by writers who are still young (for instance, Amy Tan and Sandra Cisneros). We have tried to read widely in today's writing, and we think we have found some new voices with stories, poems, and plays that are exceptionally strong—pieces worth the time of busy students and busy instructors.

Our editorial material introduces students to the elements of literature and assists them to read actively—which in part means to think critically. To this end, we include several extended interpretations (some by students) in the introductory chapters on responding to literature; and we provide questions on about half of the selections and brief chapters on getting ideas for writing. We also include material on manuscript form. For the most part, however, we try to keep ourselves in the background. We know, as teachers, that the proper place for extended discussion of stories, poems, and plays is not the textbook but the classroom.

In providing some apparatus, but not too much, we have kept in mind Robert Frost's remark: "You don't chew a poem—macerate a poem—for an evening's pleasure, for a Roman holiday. You touch it. You are aware that a good deal of it is missed."

WHAT'S NEW IN THE EXPANDED EDITION

This book is both old and new. It retains material (literature and apparatus) that instructors have indicated has worked well in class, but it includes new selections as well as new apparatus. We have added 25 stories to the 40 of the soft-cover edition, 27 poems (bringing the total to about 200), and 2 plays (for a total of 14). The soft-cover book presented Flannery O'Connor in depth, with three stories and a substantial selection of her comments on literature, but we now also present Raymond Carver in depth. Further, in addition to including three stories by Kate Chopin we now include her novel, *The Awakening*.

As in the shorter edition, some familiar authors are represented by relatively unfamiliar works (Chekhov by "Enemies," Maupassant by "Mademoiselle," Chopin by "Ripe Figs" and "The Storm" as well as by the familiar "Story of an Hour"), and

many talented new writers are included (for instance, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Carolyn Forché, Rita Dove, Li-Young Lee, David Mura, Tim O'Brien, and Maria Viramontes). While choosing the material, whether classic or contemporary, we have kept in mind the advice a tightrope walker gave to a student who was trying to learn her art: "Whenever you feel yourself falling toward one side, lean toward the other."

The Expanded Edition offers not only additional works of literature but also additional pedagogic apparatus designed to stimulate critical thinking, notably four casebooks that invite students to evaluate interpretations of literature. The first of these, on Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" includes two of Oates's comments as well as the opposed views of several critics. The second casebook, on Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," is unusual; it consists not only of the poem, the manuscript of the poem (showing Frost's handwritten revisions), and Frost's comments on the poem but also three essays by students, with their preliminary notes. It thus allows instructors and students to talk not only about interpretations of Frost's poem but also about issues in developing an interpretive essay. The third casebook, also on a short poem (Emily Dickinson's "The Soul selects her own Society"), consists of the poem, the annotated manuscript, and four published interpretations. The fourth casebook, on Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, includes two comments by Miller, two reviews of the original production, and two later evaluations.

The three essays by students in the Frost casebook are not the only new essays by students in the Expanded Edition. The shorter version included three chapters on writing about fiction, poetry, and drama, but we have now added to each of these chapters an essay by a student, along with some of the student's preliminary jottings. Because the essay in the chapter on writing about drama is a documented paper on *Death of a Salesman*, it can supplement the casebook on the play, and it can also serve as something of a guide for writing a paper that uses sources. (Three additional essays by students, retained from the shorter edition, are printed in Appendix A, "Writing Essays about Literature.")

Also new to the Enlarged Edition are a chapter entitled "Some Critical Approaches" (a brief survey of some schools of criticism) and an appendix, "Glossary of Literary Terms."

USING THE BOOK

Probably most instructors first teach fiction, then poetry, and then drama—the order followed here. But the three sections can be taught in any sequence because each is relatively independent. For example, symbolism is discussed in each of the three sections, and although the three discussions have a cumulative effect, any of the three can be used first. This flexibility runs throughout the book; one can teach everything straight through, or skip one's way through a section, or bring in (whenever one wishes) the anthologized stories, poems, and plays that conclude the sections. Perhaps the only chapter that ought to be taught at a specific time, or not taught at all, is Chapter 1, "Reading and Responding to Literature." Or perhaps one might assign it late in the term, after the students have read a fair amount of literature, and then invite them to evaluate the chapter.

Assuming that instructors teach fiction before poetry and drama, we suggest that they assign Chapter 1, then Chapter 2 ("A First Approach to Fiction: Responding in

Writing”), then some stories, and, before the first writing assignment, Chapter 6 (“In Brief: Getting Ideas for Writing about Fiction”) and the Appendixes A and B (“Writing Essays about Literature” and “Remarks about Manuscript Form”).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Finally, after this elaborate explanation of what has been done, we wish to thank the people who helped us do it. For the preparation of the expanded edition, we owe a special debt to Lisa Moore, Judith Leet, and Janet Frick of HarperCollins, to Virginia Creeden for permissions assistance, and to the following instructors: Ken Anderson, Floyd College; Alfred Arteaga, University of California, Berkeley; Rance Baker, San Antonio College; Lois Birky, Illinois Central College; Carol Boyd, Black Hawk College; Lois Bragg, Gallaudet University; Conrad Carroll, Northern Kentucky University; Robert Coltrane, Lock Haven University; Charles Darling, Greater Hartford Community College; Richard Dietrich, University of South Florida; Gail Duffy, Dean Junior College; Marilyn Edelstein, Santa Clara University; Toni Empringham, El Camino College; Craig Etchison, Glenville State College; Robert Farrell, Housatonic Community College; Elaine Fitzpatrick, Massasoit College; James E. Ford, University of Nebraska—Lincoln; Donna Galati, University of South Dakota; Marvin P. Garrett, University of Cincinnati; Francis B. Hanify, Luzerne County Community College; Blair Hemstock, Keyano College (Canada); Paula Hester, Indian Hills Community College; James L. Johnson, California State University, Fresno; Edwina Jordan, Illinois Central College; Kate Kiefer, Colorado State University; Sandra Lakey, Pennsylvania College of Technology; Wayne P. Lindquist, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire; Cecilia G. Martyn, Montclair State College; Paul McVeigh, Northern Virginia Community College; Elizabeth Metzger, University of South Florida; William S. Nicholson, Eastern Shore Community College; Stephen O'Neill, Bucks County Community College; Richard Pepp, Massasoit Community College; Betty Jo Hicks Peters, Morehead State University; Frank Perkins, Quincy College; Barbara Pokdowka, Commonwealth College; John C. Presley, Central Virginia Community College; Patricia R. Rochester, University of Southwestern Louisiana; Betty Rhodes, Faulkner State College; Martha Saunders, West Georgia College; Allison Shumsky, Northwestern Michigan College; Isabel B. Stanley, East Tennessee State University; LaVonne Swanson, National College; Beverly Taylor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Merle Thompson, North Virginia Community College; Cyrilla Vessey, North Virginia Community College; Mildred White, Oholone College; Margaret Whitt, University of Denver; Betty J. Williams, East Tennessee State University; Donald R. Williams, North Shore Community College; Donnie Yeilding, Central Texas College.

Our thanks also to the many users of the earlier editions who gave us advice on how and where to make improvements: Linda Bamber, David Cavitch, Robert Cyr, Arthur Friedman, Nancy Grayson, Martha Hicks-Courant, Billie Ingram, Martha Lappen, Judy Maas, Deirdre McDonald, Patricia Meier, Ronald E. Pepin, William Roberts, Clair Seng-Niemoeiller, Virginia Shine, and Charles L. Walker.

We are especially grateful for the comments and suggestions offered by the following scholars: Priscilla B. Bellair, Carroll Britch, Don Brunn, Malcolm B. Clark, Terence A. Dalrymple, Franz Douskey, Gerald Duchovnay, Peter Dumanis, Estelle Easterly, Adam Fischer, Martha Flint, Robert H. Fossum, Gerald Hasham, Richard

Henze, Catharine M. Hoff, Grace S. Kehrer, Nancy E. Kensicki, Linda Kraus, Juanita Laing, Vincent J. Liesenfeld, Martha McGowan, John H. Meagher III, Stuart Millner, Edward Anthony Nagel, Peter L. Neff, Robert F. Panara, Ronald E. Pepin, Jane Pierce, Robert M. Post, Kris Rapp, Mark Reynolds, John Richardson, Donald H. Sanborn, Marlene Sebeck, Frank E. Sexton, Peggy Skaggs, David Stuehler, James E. Tamer, Carol Teaff, C. Uejio, Hugh Whitmeyer, Manfred Wolf, Joseph Zaitchik.

Finally, we are also grateful for valuable suggestions made by Charles Christensen, Joan Feinberg, X. J. Kennedy, Carolyn Potts, Marcia Stubbs, Helen Vendler, and Ann Chalmers Watts.

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Publisher's Note:

An Introduction to Literature, Expanded Edition, is accompanied by an extensive multimedia teaching resource package. Professors Barnet, Berman, and Burto have prepared an instructors' manual, *Teaching An Introduction to Literature*, with suggestions for teaching every selection in the book.

In addition, HarperCollins has provided an exclusive videotape designed specifically to accompany this book: "Writers on Writers" (produced by the BBC, WGBH, and HarperCollins). "Writers on Writers" contains a dramatization of Chekhov's "Enemies" (the story is included in *An Introduction to Literature*), followed by an interview with Jamaica Kincaid—who wrote the screenplay for the dramatization of "Enemies," and who is also represented in this book—in which she discusses Chekhov's story and also her own work.

Numerous videotapes and audiotapes of other literary works are also available to enhance the student's experience of literature. To receive more information, and to request a copy of *Teaching An Introduction to Literature*, contact your HarperCollins representative, or write to



Humanities Marketing Manager
HarperCollins College Publishers
10 East 53rd Street
New York, New York 10022

Contents

PREFACE xix

1 *Reading and Responding to Literature* 1



What Is Literature? 1

Looking at an Example: **Robert Frost's *Immigrants*** 2  

Contemporary Voice

Looking at a Second Example: **Pat Mora's *Immigrants***

5  

Thinking About a Story: *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* 6  

Contemporary Voice

Stories True and False: **Grace Paley's *Samuel*** 9  



What's Past Is Prologue 12

PART ONE

Fiction

2 *A First Approach to Fiction: Responding in Writing* 17



Ernest Hemingway, *Cat in the Rain* 17



Responses: Annotations and Journal Entries 20  



3 *Stories and Meanings* 25


Anton Chekhov, *Misery* 27  

Kate Chopin: Three Stories 34

Ripe Figs 34  

The Story of an Hour 35  

The Storm 37  

 Selection followed by Topics for Discussion and Writing.



4 *Narrative Point of View* 41



Participant (or First-Person) Points of View 42

Nonparticipant (or Third-Person) Points of View 43

The Point of a Point of View 44



Contemporary Voice



John Updike, *A & P* 45  

John Updike, *The Rumor* 50  

5 *Allegory and Symbolism* 58

A Note on Setting 61

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Young Goodman Brown* 61  

Eudora Welty, *Livvie* 70  

6 *In Brief: Getting Ideas for Writing About Fiction* 80

Plot 80

Character 81

Point of View 81

Setting 81

Symbolism 82

Style 82



Theme 82

A Story, Notes, and an Essay 83

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Cask of Amontillado* 83

A Student Response 88

Notes 88

Ann Geraghty, Essay: Revenge, Noble and Ignoble 90  

7 *Thinking Critically About Fiction:*

**A Casebook on Joyce Carol Oates,
"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"** 94

A Note on Interpretation 94

**Joyce Carol Oates, *Where Are You Going, Where Have You
Been?*** 96

- Anonymous**, *The Demon Lover* 107
Christopher R. Reaske and John R. Knott, Jr., *Interview with Joyce Carol Oates* 109
Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" and "Smooth Talk": *Short Story into Film* 109
Tom Quirk, *From A Source for "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"* 112
Mike Tierce and John Michael Crafton, *Connie's Tambourine Man: A New Reading of Arnold Friend* 114
Larry Rubin, *Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"* 118
A. R. Coulthard, *Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" as Pure Realism* 121

8 *Two Fiction Writers in Depth:* *Flannery O'Connor and Raymond Carver* 126

- Flannery O'Connor**: *Three Stories and Observations on Literature* 126
A Good Man Is Hard to Find 127
Revelation 138
Parker's Back 151
On Fiction: Remarks from Essays and Letters 164
On Interpreting A Good Man Is Hard to Find 168
Raymond Carver: *Three Stories, and Talking About Stories* 169
Popular Mechanics 169
Cathedral 170
A Small, Good Thing 180
Talking about Stories 194

9 *A Collection of Short Fiction* 198

- Edgar Allan Poe**, *The Fall of the House of Usher* 201
Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych* 212
Sarah Orne Jewett, *A White Heron* 248
Sarah Orne Jewett, *Miss Tempy's Watchers* 254
Guy de Maupassant, *Mademoiselle* 261
Anton Chekhov, *Enemies* 264
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* 272
James Joyce, *Araby* 283
James Joyce, *Clay* 288
Virginia Woolf, *A Haunted House* 292
Virginia Woolf, *Lappin and Lapinova* 293
Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* 299
D. H. Lawrence, *The Horse Dealer's Daughter* 328
Katherine Anne Porter, *The Tilting of Granny Weatherall* 339
William Faulkner, *A Rose for Emily* 345
Zora Neale Hurston, *Sweat* 352
Frank O'Connor, *Guests of the Nation* 360

- Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Son from America* 368
 Shirley Jackson, *The Lottery* 373

Contemporary Voices



- Naguib Mahfouz, *The Answer Is No* 379
 Tillie Olsen, *I Stand Here Ironing* 381
 Ralph Ellison, *Battle Royal* 386
 Hisaye Yamamoto, *Yoneko's Earthquake* 396
 Gabriel García Márquez, *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children* 404
 Chinua Achebe, *Civil Peace* 408
 Alice Munro, *Boys and Girls* 412
 Alice Munro, *How I Met My Husband* 421
 V. S. Naipaul, *The Night Watchman's Occurrence Book* 432
 Jack Forbes, *Only Approved Indians Can Play: Made in USA* 437
 Patricia Grace, *Flies* 439
 Toni Cade Bambara, *The Lesson* 441
 Margaret Atwood, *Rape Fantasies* 446
 Garrison Keillor, *The Tip-Top Club* 452
 Liliana Heker, *The Stolen Party* 460
 José Armas, *El Tonto del Barrio* 464
 Alice Walker, *Everyday Use* 469
 Tobias Wolff, *Powder* 475
 Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* 478
 Leslie Marmon Silko, *The Man to Send Rain Clouds* 489
 Jamaica Kincaid, *Girl* 493
 Jamaica Kincaid, *Columbus in Chains* 494
 Gloria Naylor, *The Two* 499
 Amy Tan, *Two Kinds* 505
 Rita Dove, *Second-Hand Man* 512
 Louise Erdrich, *Fleur* 517
 Kazuo Ishiguro, *A Family Supper* 525
 Sandra Cisneros, *One Holy Night* 532
 Helena Maria Viramontes, *The Moths* 536

10 Observations on the Novel 541

11 A Novel: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* 545























PART TWO

Poetry

12 *A First Approach to Poetry: Responding in Writing* 633Langston Hughes, *Harlem* 634  Thinking about *Harlem* 634







Some Journal Entries 635

Final Draft 637



13 *Lyric Poetry* 640Anonymous, *Michael Row the Boat Ashore* 640Anonymous, *Careless Love* 641Anonymous, *The Colorado Trail* 642Anonymous, *Western Wind* 642  *Contemporary Voice*Li-Young Lee, *I Ask My Mother to Sing* 643  Langston Hughes, *Evenin' Air Blues* 643  Langston Hughes, *Negro* 644  John Lennon and Paul McCartney, *Eleanor Rigby* 645  Edna St. Vincent Millay, *The Spring and the Fall* 646  Julia Ward Howe, *Battle Hymn of the Republic* 648  Wilfred Owen, *Anthem for Doomed Youth* 649  Walt Whitman, *A Noiseless Patient Spider* 650  John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* 650  e. e. cummings, *anyone lived in a pretty how town* 652  14 *The Speaking Tone of Voice* 655Robert Burns, *Mary Morison* 656Robert Burns, *John Anderson My Jo* 656  Robert Browning, *My Last Duchess* 657  



Diction 659



Tone 660

Robert Herrick, *To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time* 661Thomas Hardy, *The Man He Killed* 662  Michael Drayton, *Since There's No Help* 663  Elizabeth Bishop, *Filling Station* 664  Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Spring and Fall: To a Young Child* 665  

Contemporary Voice

Ted Hughes, *Hawk Roosting* 666  



William Blake, *The Clod and the Pebble* 667  

Countee Cullen, *For a Lady I Know* 668  

The Voice of the Satirist 669



e. e. cummings, *next to of course god america i* 670



Contemporary Voices

John Updike, *Youth's Progress* 671  

Marge Piercy, *Barbie Doll* 672  

Marge Piercy, *What's That Smell in the Kitchen?* 673  

Mitsuye Yamada, *To the Lady* 674  

Louise Erdrich, *Dear John Wayne* 675  

15 **Figurative Language: Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Apostrophe** 678



Robert Burns, *A Red, Red Rose* 679

Sylvia Plath, *Metaphors* 680  

Simile 681

Robert Herrick, *Her Legs* 681

Contemporary Voice

Richard Wilbur, *A Simile for Her Smile* 682  

Metaphor 682

John Keats, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* 683  

Contemporary Voice

Marge Piercy, *A Work of Artifice* 684  



Personification 685

Apostrophe 685



Edmund Waller, *Song* 686

William Carlos Williams, *The Red Wheelbarrow* 688





Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Eagle* 688  

- Christina Rossetti, *Uphill* 689 
 Randall Jarrell, *The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner* 690 



Contemporary Voices




- Seamus Heaney, *Digging* 691 
 Louise Erdrich, *Indian Boarding School: The Runaways*
 692 

16 *Figurative Language: Imagery and Symbolism* 694



- William Blake, *The Sick Rose* 695
 Thomas Hardy, *Neutral Tones* 696 
 Edgar Allan Poe, *To Helen* 697 
 D. H. Lawrence, *Snake* 698 
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Kubla Khan* 700 

Contemporary Voices

- Lorna Dee Cervantes, *Refugee Ship* 703 
 Adrienne Rich, *Diving into the Wreck* 704 



















- Wallace Stevens, *Anecdote of the Jar* 707 
 Wallace Stevens, *The Emperor of Ice Cream* 708 
 A Note on Haiku 708 
 Basho, *On the withered bough* 709
 Moritake, *Fallen petals rise* 709
 Sokan, *If only we could* 709
 Shiki, *River in summer* 710
 Basho, *An old pond* 710
 Sengai, *If a pond were here* 710
 Gary Snyder, *After weeks of watching the roof leak* 710
 Taigi, *Look, O look, there go* 711

17 *Irony and Paradox* 712



- John Hall Wheelock, *Earth* 714 
 Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias* 714 



Contemporary Voice

- Linda Pastan, *Ethics* 715 







- Stevie Smith, *Not Waving but Drowning* 716  
 John Crowe Ransom, *Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter* 717  
 Andrew Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress* 718  
 John Donne, *The Flea* 720  
 John Donne, *Holy Sonnet XIV* ("Batter my heart, three-personed God") 721  
 A. E. Housman, *Shropshire Lad #27* (Is my team ploughing) 722  
 Langston Hughes, *Dream Boogie* 723  
 Langston Hughes, *Theme for English B* 725  
 Langston Hughes, *Passing* 726  

Contemporary Voice



- Martín Espada, *Tony Went to the Bodega but He Didn't Buy Anything* 727  





- Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Love Is Not All: It Is Not Meat nor Drink* 728  

18 *Rhythm and Versification* 730



- Ezra Pound, *An Immorality* 730
 A. E. Housman, *Eight O'Clock* 732  
 Theodore Roethke, *My Papa's Waltz* 733  
 William Carlos Williams, *The Dance* 734  

Contemporary Voice

- Gwendolyn Brooks, *We Real Cool* 736  

- Dylan Thomas, *Do not go gentle into that good night* 737  
 Robert Francis, *The Pitcher* 738  
 Versification: A Glossary for Reference 739

Contemporary Voices

- George Starbuck, *Fable for Blackboard* 742
 X. J. Kennedy, *Nothing in Heaven Functions as It Ought* 745  

Walt Whitman, *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer* 746

Contemporary Voice

Carolyn Forché, *The Colonel* 747  

19 *In Brief: Getting Ideas for Writing About Poetry* 749

First Response 749

Speaker and Tone 749



Audience 750

Structure and Form 750

Center of Interest and Theme 750

Diction 750

Sound Effects 751

A Note on Explication 751  

Adrienne Rich, *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* 752

Maria Fuentes, Essay: "Aunt Jennifer's Screen and Adrienne Rich's Poem" 753

20 *Thinking Critically About Poetry I:*



**A Casebook on Robert Frost,
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy
Evening 756**

Robert Frost, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* 756



Manuscript Version of *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* 757

Three Interpretations by Students 759



Darrel MacDonald, Annotated Text 759

Essay: *Stopping by Woods—and Going On* 760  

Sara Fong, Journal Entry 763

Essay: "*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*" as a Short Story 764  

Peter Franken, Journal Entry 767

Essay: The Meaning of "*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*" 768  



Selection followed by Topics for Discussion and Writing.

21 *Thinking Critically About Poetry II:*

A Casebook on Emily Dickinson, The Soul selects her own Society 770

- Emily Dickinson**, *The Soul selects her own Society* 770
 Manuscript Version of *The Soul selects her own Society* 771
Elizabeth Bowman, *An Interpretation of "The Soul selects her own Society"* 772
Larry Rubin, *Response to Elizabeth Bowman's Interpretation of "The Soul selects her own Society"* 773
Anthony Hecht, *On Dickinson's "The Soul selects her own Society"* 774
Judith Farr, *The Passion of Emily Dickinson* 774

22 *Two Poets in Depth:*

Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost 776

- Emily Dickinson**: Poems, Letters, and Comments About Poetry 776
These are the days when Birds come back 777
Wild Nights—Wild Nights! 777
There's a certain Slant of light 778
I heard a Fly buzz—when I died 778
This World is not Conclusion 780
I like to see it lap the Miles 780
Because I could not stop for Death 781
A narrow Fellow in the Grass 782
Further in Summer than the Birds 782
Tell all the Truth but tell it slant 783
A Route of Evanescence 783
Those—dying, then 784
Apparently with no surprise 784
 Letter to Susan Gilbert (Dickinson) 784
 Letter to T. W. Higginson 785
 Letter to T. W. Higginson 786
Robert Frost: Poems, Letters, and Comments About Poetry 786
The Pasture 787
Mending Wall 787
The Wood-Pile 788
The Road Not Taken 789
The Telephone 790



Selection followed by Topics for Discussion and Writing.