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The Heath Anthology of American Literature

THIRD EDITION



Volume 1

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For Elaine Hedges (1927–1997), our friend and colleague.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This anthology has been long in the making. Indeed, some of the readers of this first edition may not have been born when the idea for it was initially discussed in 1968. At that time many literary scholars were becoming aware of the narrowness of what was taught as "American Literature." Many courses—and some textbooks as well—were limited to perhaps a dozen "major" writers; yet it was increasingly clear that any coherent and accurate account of our cultural heritage meant knowing a far wider range of authors. In graduate school during the 1950s, the only minority writers, rarely encountered, were Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin; vet, as the Civil Rights movement had begun to make clear, blacks and other people of color in American society had developed rich literary cultures. But where were these writers in American literature courses and anthologies? Similarly, most women authors, except perhaps Emily Dickinson and one or two others, were ignored as marginal; yet as one began to read American women writers, one discovered work of great power and vitality. Where were the women? It was acknowledged that the texts of English colonists, such as John Smith and William Bradford; of Puritan divines, such as Cotton Mather and Ionathan Edwards; and of the Founding Fathers were appropriate to American literature courses. But contemporary works from the half-continent that was then Spanish America and later texts concerned with similar issues of religion and politics were mainly dismissed as outside the bounds of literary study. It seemed inconsistent to relegate Cabeza de Vaca, Frederick Douglass, or Charlotte Perkins Gilman to courses on history or politics.

In short, like many black scholars before them, large numbers of teachers and scholars of all ethnic backgrounds began to question the "canon" of American literature—that is, the list of works and authors believed to be sufficiently important to read, study, write about, teach, and thus transmit to the next generation of readers. This questioning led in a number of directions. First, scholars documented the fact that the canon of American literature had changed substantially over time. In the period after World War I, for example, the "Schoolroom Poets"—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier-fell from eminence, and Herman Melville, who had been all but forgotten, came to be viewed as one of America's major novelists. Similarly, many of the women writers who had once been widely read and studied—such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Edith Wharton—began to receive less attention as compared with Mark Twain and Stephen Crane. As the canon changed, so too did the courses and anthologies. A new anthology would necessarily be different from its predecessors, for as Emerson had put it, "the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet."

Second, scholars in the late 1960s, recognizing the richness and diversity of American culture, began to seek out the large number of lost, forgotten, or suppressed literary texts that had emerged from and illustrated that diversity. That has been a long and slow process, for it entailed not only locating, editing, and publishing such work, but also rethinking traditional ideas about what is of value in literature and about intellectual frameworks for studying it. In the 1970s a whole new scholarship developed that examined the cultural implications of gender, race, and class for our understanding and appreciation of literature. But courses in American literature, and the textbooks on which they depended, were slow to respond to the new scholarship. Many works from the past were reissued briefly, only to disappear from the market; others remained out of print. Anthologies were even slower to change; they continued to focus on a canon little different from that established half a century ago. The problem came to be how to provide teachers and students with a textbook that truly displayed the enormous richness of the cultures of America.

In 1979, in an effort to accelerate the process of change in teaching, my colleagues and I organized a project through The Feminist Press called "Reconstructing American Literature." It was supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, and later by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Lilly Endowment. In 1982, that project convened a summer institute at Yale University designed to explore the implications of minority and feminist scholarship for the teaching of American literature. In the intense and often conflicted weeks of the institute, the forty participants and the resource people—including Elizabeth Ammons, Houston Baker, Juan Bruce-Novoa, Mary Anne Ferguson, Ann Fitzgerald, Phyllis Franklin, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Carlos Hortas, Annette Kolodny, Amy Ling, Peggy McIntosh, Annette Niemtzow, A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, Mary Helen Washington, and Ana Zentella—discussed both issues of theory and the practical problems of initiating and institutionalizing change. A number of activities emerged from that institute.

Participants organized and held a series of workshops in different parts of the country on the issues raised at the institute and, more generally, on the problem of reconstructing American literature. These seminars made it plain that the movement for change in scholarship and in curriculum was deep and widespread. To further its momentum, a volume of syllabi, course materials, and commentary—some of it prepared at the institute—was gathered and published under the title *Reconstructing American Literature* (ed. Paul Lauter, Old Westbury: Feminist Press, 1983). That book provided faculty with models for changing their own courses, and it helped scholars who were developing anthologies to determine what was being taught in relatively advanced classrooms. But the book also illustrated how teachers were constrained by the limitations of existing texts: For example, hardly any syllabi included work by Latino or Asian-American writers, largely because no such writings were then included in any anthology. We determined that, in preparing a new anthology—the final objective of the Reconstructing American Literature project—we would break through such limitations.

Most of the ideas that have guided the construction of this anthology were given definition at the Yale institute. Because we want students to be able to gain a sense of the formal and historical cross-currents that helped shape individual works within a given period, we provide a much richer selection of authors from each time frame than is available in any other anthology. Thus, for example, we

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include substantial selections from the traditionally important antebellum fiction writers, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville-incorporating eight Poe tales, all of The Scarlet Letter, and two Melville novellas, among other works. But we also present a uniquely rich group of other narratives of the period, including material by the most widely read American of the time, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and important prose by William Wells Brown, Alice Cary, Rebecca Harding Davis, Caroline Kirkland, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Elizabeth Drew Stoddard, and Harriet Wilson, among others. These writers produced works of literary excellence and historical significance that are worth studying on their own terms. They also newly illuminate the texts of better-known authors as well as the milieu from which they emerged. We believe that reading this range of writers offers opportunities for drawing stimulating comparisons and contrasts between canonical and noncanonical figures, between female and male, between one ethnic writer and another. It allows us to study the diverse and changing cultures of America, not only a narrow group of authors. It is not that heretofore noncanonical texts provide, so to speak, the landscape of "minor" writing from which the great monuments of American literature rise. Rather, studying and comparing these differing works will enlarge our understanding of-even help us fundamentally redefine-the literature that has in fact been produced in the United States. This comparative process may thus play a key role in changing the traditional foci and contexts for the study of American literature and bring into the classroom the energy and excitement generated by the new scholarship on women and minorities.

We have sought to use such mutually illuminating texts throughout. Thus we print fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish and French, as well as English, narratives of discovery and exploration. Additionally, we have included some Native American responses to the arrival and the advances of the Europeans. And later, in the nineteenth century, we present selections from the quite different visions of Indian-White interactions of James Fenimore Cooper and Catharine Maria Sedgwick, as well as the views on that subject of Native American writers like William Apess, Elias Boudinot, and John Rollin Ridge.

A second principle of selection concerns reasonably familiar but undervalued writers. We include several works by authors like Charles Chesnutt, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Edith Wharton, who have often been represented by single well-worn pieces. Thus, instead of limiting students to Freeman's "A New England Nun," for example, or the deservedly popular "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" we also include "A Church Mouse"—her account of a poor woman's application of the ideas of nonviolent action to her own survival—as well as the powerful and disturbing "Old Woman Magoun." Similarly, we include not only the largest selection of Emily Dickinson's poems available in an anthology, but 24 of her letters, mainly because for Dickinson—as for many women—letter and journal writing were significant forms of artistic expression.

Third, in choosing among works of literary accomplishment—both by lesser-known writers and by those in the traditional canon—we have in part been guided by how a text engages concerns central to the period in which it was written as well as to the overall development of American culture. Our goal has not been to turn this literature anthology into a series of historical illustrations nor to organize it according to arbitrary themes. Rather, our selections reflect an effort, which we believe appropriate and important, to reconnect literature and its study with the

society and culture of which it is fundamentally a part. For example, the question of gender—the nature of difference, the "proper spheres" of women and men, the character of women's and men's work and sexuality—has been a key concern since the earliest period. Thus, in the eighteenth century, work by Judith Sargent Murray became important; and in the nineteenth century, material by Margaret Fuller, excerpts from Harriet Ann Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's classic "The Yellow Wall-Paper," and Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron" became obvious choices. But this concern also led to selecting from the large corpus of Melville's work "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," a story rich both in symbolism and social commentary. It also led to including texts otherwise unavailable in such an anthology by eighteenth-century women poets, as well as by Sarah Grimké, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Fanny Fern, Sojourner Truth, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and particular fictional selections from Louisa May Alcott and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. We believe readers will discover these to be not only of great interest in themselves, but also important to the discussion of gender as a category of contemporary as well as of eighteenthand nineteenth-century literary discourse. Further, this type of selection enables the kind of illuminating comparisons—between, for example, Melville's "Paradise and Tartarus" story and Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills"—to which we alluded above.

Similarly, many of the works we have chosen treat issues and subjects that have often been downplayed, even avoided: such topics include household labor in poems of the colonial period, child abuse in one Alice Cary story, sexuality, including homosexuality, in poetry from Whitman to Rich, the forms of affirmation as well as the experience of racial violence in minority communities, described by writers like Sui-Sin Far (Edith Maud Eaton), Carlos Bulosan, and Paule Marshall. Nor have we confined ourselves to traditional analyses of familiar themes, such as what it means to be "American." This question has been of central concern to writers since the colonial period; Franklin, Emerson, and Henry Adams offer different, though related, responses to it. But their work, vital as it is, by no means exhausts the inquiry. In fact, the question intensifies for those who begin on the margins of American society, as slaves, immigrants, or "native" Americans. Accordingly, we have included in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period an unusual and what we think readers will find to be a moving selection from the writings of Booker T. Washington, Abraham Cahan, Sui-Sin Far, Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin), Alexander Posey, and Mary Antin.

As this roster of authors suggests, a major principle of selection has been to represent as fully as possible the varied cultures of the United States. American cultures sometimes overlap, sometimes differ, sometimes develop separately, sometimes in interactive patterns. To convey this diversity, we have included what is by far the widest sampling of the work of minority and white women writers available in any anthology of American literature. This selection includes material by 134 women of all races, more than 30 individual Native American authors, some anonymous (as well as some 20 texts from tribal origins), 62 Africans and African-Americans, 19 Latinos (as well as 13 texts from earlier Spanish originals and 2 from French), and 12 Asian-Americans. We have also included significant selections from Jewish, Italian, and other ethnic traditions. In choosing this varied work, we have not limited ourselves to contemporary writers, but have tried to show how the

flourishing of ethnic and minority literatures today is deeply rooted in both formal and folk traditions that have developed in this land over centuries. For these reasons and for their inherent interest, we have also printed a number of songs and tales from America's differing cultures.

We have also sought to underline the historical development of particular literary voices in American culture by placing together writers who, in one way or another, constituted a group or "school." In some situations, these writers knew and were influenced by each other. Such was the case, for example, among abolitionists, among many of the later nineteenth-century women writers who make up the first section of Volume 2, or among the writers of the New Negro Renaissance, whom we have placed together. We believe this organizational innovation will offer useful linkages for reading and teaching without imposing a historical artifice on the writers. It could be argued, of course, that placing the artists of the New Negro Renaissance together in a sense ghettoizes them and deemphasizes their impact upon the development of modernism. We are aware of this problem; but having this rich selection of writers together will, we believe, enable students to better comprehend the scope and internal diversity of the Renaissance, the interactions of its participants, as well as the connections between this cultural movement and the wider black community.

We have in general sought to organize the texts in units we believe will be interesting for reading and helpful to teaching. Underlying this organizational strategy is our belief that the paradigms we use to frame the study of literature are as important to how we understand it as the content of our study *per se.* For example, the ideas as well as the institutions of Puritanism are obviously important. But the religious life of what is now America has roots far older and more diverse than those established in the Massachusetts Bay colony. A class on "Puritan Writings" offers significant opportunity for studying essential works, but it leads in different directions from a class on "Early American Religious Cultures," which might incorporate Spanish Catholic works as well as texts from Native American oral origins. Neither approach is "right"—or "wrong." But they foreground different texts and different cultural traditions. Our units are not designed to foreclose other organizational schemes but to make visible the intellectual assumptions always present in any method of structuring an anthology.

In order to accomplish the major broadening of coverage at which we have aimed, we have, especially in the contemporary selection, chosen authors we think of as representing different cultural voices. Of course, no one writer can "represent" the uniqueness of any other writer. In another sense, however, anthologies have always selected at least some writers on this basis—to "represent" the Imagist movement, for example, or social protest literature of the 1930s or "local color" writing of an earlier time. Whatever injustice this procedure may do to individual writers we have omitted, it has virtues over and above that of breadth. It allows readers to emphasize—as is reasonable for a survey text—historical contexts and literary trends rather than to focus primarily on a few prominent authors. As readers will see, we include larger selections of the traditionally canonical writers than are likely to be read in a survey course. But on balance, we have felt it more vital to strive for the kind of range offered here than to provide readers with additional but more peripheral works by writers who are already familiar to most readers.

In addition to helping us develop the conceptual frameworks for this project, the Yale institute provided the organizational strategy for pulling together this distinctive anthology. It was clear from the outset that no small, homogeneous editorial board—of the sort that had up to then characterized *every* anthology—could bring together all the scholarly resources necessary to carry out this effort. Therefore, one of our first decisions was to gather an editorial board unique in its large size and in its diversity: in its initial composition the board had equal numbers of women and men, minority and white participants; members came from every part of the country, taught in virtually every kind of institution, and specialized in most of the periods and varieties of American literature.

In addition, however, an institute participant, Margaret O'Connor, proposed that instead of having even this large editorial board responsible for gathering all the writing to be included in the anthology, we ask the profession at large which authors and works they thought should be considered for a "reconstructed" American literature text. Consequently, we wrote to thousands of faculty members teaching American literature. More than 500 authors were suggested for inclusion. Potential "contributing editors" were then asked to suggest specific texts, and to provide a brief rationale for their selections. The editorial board read through this enormously fascinating—and physically huge—set of recommended texts, made an initial cut, and then in a series of meetings over three years narrowed the selections to what could fit within the covers of two large volumes.

This process, while cumbersome and time-consuming, has had a number of virtues. First, it represented a resurveying of the territory—really, given the changes in what was called "American literature," an initial survey of what was virtually a new literary world. Instead of basing our initial selection on that of previous anthologies or on our graduate school training, and then supplementing or subtracting according to our own principles, we began with the vast range of the literary output of this country and have narrowed from that. We would hardly claim that nothing worthwhile has been omitted; but much that was lost and is excellent has been found.

Furthermore, this process has enabled us to incorporate in the anthology, and thus make available to readers, a great deal of new scholarship developed by leading specialists in their fields. These specialists made the initial suggestions about what should be included, wrote the headnotes for the authors they proposed, prepared notes for the texts finally selected, compiled selected bibliographies, and provided materials for the teaching guide. While editorial board members are responsible for the final versions of the headnotes, we have been able to extend the range of this anthology far beyond the limits of the board as a whole.

Finally, this process offers readers differing approaches to authors and varied writing styles in headnotes and introductions. In a way, these critical differences reflect the very diversity of the literature included here. They may also furnish students with a wider range of models for engaging texts and thus, perhaps, encourage confidence in their own judgments and ways of reading.

Whenever possible, the date of first publication follows each selection. In a few instances of special significance, the date of composition is also given.

We decided that it would be helpful to provide extended introductions to each historical period, as well as to the divisions within those periods. These introductions have been designed to offer readers information about the American society

and cultures within which the authors created. Increasingly, literary study has moved away from purely formal scrutiny of isolated texts toward analyses that depend upon an examination of such historical contexts. We ask not only how a poem or story is constructed, about its language and imagery, but also about how it "worked" in its world (and works in ours), and how it was related to other texts of its own and other times. While these introductions do not pretend to be complete accounts of the periods, we believe that, together with the variety of texts themselves, they will provide a basis for informed interpretation of the works included in these volumes.

One member of the editorial board was ultimately in charge of writing each period introduction and the briefer section introductions; many other members contributed materials to one or more of the introductions. Carla Mulford was responsible for the introductions to the Colonial Period: to 1700 and the Eighteenth Century; she used materials provided by Wendy Martin, Juan Bruce-Novoa, Andrew Wiget, and Richard Yarborough. Paul Lauter was responsible for the Early Nineteenth Century: 1800-1865 introduction, using materials provided by Amy Ling, Daniel Littlefield, Raymund Paredes, and Andrew Wiget. Elaine Hedges was responsible for the Late Nineteenth Century: 1865-1910 introduction, using materials provided by Amy Ling, Daniel Littlefield, Raymund Paredes, Andrew Wiget, and Richard Yarborough. Charles Molesworth was responsible for the introduction to the Modern Period: 1910-1945, using materials provided by Elaine Hedges, Paul Lauter, Amy Ling, and Daniel Littlefield; Hortense Spillers was responsible for the introduction to the New Negro Renaissance. Linda Wagner-Martin was responsible for the introduction to the Contemporary Period: 1945 to the Present, using materials provided by Paul Lauter, Amy Ling, Andrew Wiget, and Richard Yarborough.

As for the contributing editors who "sponsored" so many of the writers included, this is very much their anthology too. We appreciate the help of our colleagues included in the following list: Thomas P. Adler (Purdue University); Elizabeth Ammons (Tufts University); William L. Andrews (University of Kansas); Frances R. Aparicio (University of Michigan); Elaine Sargent Apthorp (San Jose State University); Evelyn Avery (Towson State University); Liahna Babener (Montana State University); Barbara A. Bardes (Loyola University of Chicago); Helen Barolini; Marleen Barr (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University); Sam S. Baskett (Michigan State University); Rosalie Murphy Baum (University of South Florida); Herman Beavers (University of Pennsylvania); Eileen T. Bender (Indiana University at Bloomington); Carol Marie Bensick (University of California, Riverside); David Bergman (Towson State University); Susan L. Blake (Lafavette College); Michael Boccia (Tufts University); Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. (University of Mississippi); Carol A. Burns (Southern Illinois University Press); John F. Callahan (Lewis and Clark College); Jane Campbell (Purdue University, Calumet); Jean Ferguson Carr (University of Pittsburgh); Allan Chavkin (Southwest Texas State University); King-Kok Cheung (University of California, Los Angeles); Beverly Lyon Clark (Wheaton College); C. B. Clark (Oklahoma City University); Arthur B. Coffin (Montana State University); Constance Coiner (State University of New York at Binghamton); James W. Coleman (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Martha E. Cook (Longwood College); Angelo Costanzo (Shippensburg University); Patti Cowell (Colorado State University); John W.

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Paul Lauter, Trinity College, for the Editorial Board

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The beginning of the preface to the second edition of this book read: "In revising *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, we have taken as our guide the old adage 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' The strongly positive reception of the first edition of this anthology led us to feel that its central principles of selection and organization worked well for both students and teachers. And the adoption of the anthology in every kind of institution of higher education, as well as in some secondary schools, has demonstrated that the opportunities this anthology affords to extend canon and curriculum are welcomed by most of our colleagues."

We see no particular reasons to revise those judgments. The principles of literary value and pedagogy on the basis of which this anthology is constructed have very wide currency today. These include the desire to convey to students a sense of the diversity that has marked this nation's culture together with certain themes and issues that have preoccupied most Americans; the need to understand the ways in which texts and contexts interact and condition one another; the importance of organizational frameworks in shaping how we experience the works of art encountered within structures like anthologies, museums, and curricula; and the reality that what readers esteem changes somewhat over time—the time marked out by eras, by generations, and by individual human lives. These are still the principles which guide our work.

For example, one significant strand in the nation's diverse culture has been the work of writers of Jewish origins. We have in this edition extended the already-strong representation of this strand by adding a play by Mordecai Manuel Noah in Volume I, as well as poetry and fiction focused on the Holocaust by Charles Reznikoff and Cynthia Ozick in Volume II. Or, to illustrate the last principle, we have confronted the assumption that late-nineteenth-century American women poets were necessarily banal and sentimental—a view so hilariously forwarded both by Caroline Kirkland's satire of Miss Fidler in A New Home—Who'll Follow? and by Mark Twain's parody of Emmeline Grangerford in Huckleberry Finn. But as the sheaf of poems assembled by contributing editor Paula Bennett illustrates, such views, however amusing, can mislead us because, in fact, much poetry of value was being written in that time over 100 years ago—a time that was largely hidden from serious critical scrutiny for much of this century.

Other changes in this edition derive from what our readers urged upon us. For example, we were asked to provide a greater variety of long texts; how to do that within the confines of an already bursting anthology wasn't very clear. We finally decided, after much discussion, to remove *The Scarlet Letter* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from the pages of the anthology proper and to make them available separately with the main books. That enabled us not only to broaden the inclusiveness of the anthology volumes, but also to offer instructors the opportunity to choose al-

ternative longer complete texts from among those available in the Riverside editions series.

We could not, of course, take all the suggestions for change readers have made; some came late, some seemed impractical, some were too costly, and some we simply did not agree with. There will be in the next few years ample opportunity to discuss, even argue about, these choices, for the two anthology volumes do not stand alone. As most readers will know, a Newsletter related to the anthology is now published twice a year. It contains materials helpful for students and for faculty—for example, on teaching Southern writing, or on gav and lesbian texts. It also provides a forum within which to discuss the issues that shape many classrooms and curricula, as well as an anthology. An even more flexible forum exists in the form of an on-line discussion list, T-AMLIT(t-amlit@list.cren.net), wherein it has been possible for practitioners in American literature, whether or not they use The Heath Anthology, to talk about the issues that concern them. And by the time you read this, we will have mounted a World Wide Web site for the anthology as well. These and other "support" mechanisms help realize what we called in the "Preface to the Second Edition" the "wide democratic participation of readers in the book's creation and use." We wish to continue encouraging that democratic spirit, not only in these forums for discussion but through the more informal mechanisms of e-mail and the good old P.O. Readers would, we think, be surprised at how many of the revisions for this edition originated—and will continue to originate—in the proposals of individual teachers of American literature.

Another way of saying this is that—especially in a time of expansion of electronic mechanisms for teaching and research—the covers of an anthology no longer mark its confines, and the publication date no longer terminates the processes of its development. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* continues to be a participatory adventure, in which we invite all readers to join.

Many readers, friends, and critics did join the editorial board and the large group of contributing editors in strengthening this third edition. We wish to thank particularly the group of reviewers who provided us with very extensive comments on the strengths and limitations of the second edition. They included Ngwarsungu Chiwengo, Maurice Duke, Dale Flynn, B.C. Hall, Hank Lazer, Martha Leighty, Judy Michna, Miles Orvell, Pamela Presser, Michael K. Ritchie, Elizabeth Wheeler, and Marilyn Wyman. Though we considered these commentaries very carefully, we were not always able to follow the advice of our reviewers. For example, Hank Lazer argued eloquently for a selection of the "Language Poets," but we were not persuaded that they would be taught by most users of the anthology. We could be wrong, and we would certainly like to hear from others on that subject, among others.

We wish also to thank the many others who commented upon or otherwise aided us in bringing together this edition. They included Elizabeth Archuleta, Helen Barolini, Janette Bradley, Lawrence Buell, William Cain, Sandi Dahlberg, Sharon L. Dean, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Fritz Fleischmann, Barbara Foley, John N. Fritz, Thomas S. Gladsky, Gregory Jay, Yiorgos D. Kalogeras, Major Rick Keating, Jeanne Phoenix Laurel, Tillie Olsen, Rhonda Pettit, David Reynolds, Cheri Louise Ross, LaVonne Brown Ruoff, Epifanio S. San Juan, Jr., Catharine Stimpson, Herman Joseph Sutter, Amy Winans, and Magdelena J. Zaborowska. Many of these scholars proposed writers for inclusion in the anthology whom we could not, at least in this

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Paul Lauter, Trinity College, for the Editorial Board