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<td>Legacy</td>
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<td>Evil Nigger Waits for Lightnin'</td>
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<td>Lawson Inada (1938- )</td>
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<td>From Our Album</td>
<td>1896</td>
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<td>In a Storm</td>
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<td>Utica, North Platte</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>Wintersong</td>
<td>1901</td>
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<td>Paula Gunn Allen (1939- )</td>
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<td>C'Koy'u, Old Woman</td>
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<td>Pocolontas to Her English Husband, John Rolfe</td>
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<td>Coyote Jungle</td>
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<td>Myth/Reeling—Dream/Showing</td>
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<td>Robert Pinsky (1940- )</td>
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<td>The Unseen</td>
<td>1910</td>
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<td>The Volume</td>
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<td>Robert Hass (1941- )</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td>Song</td>
<td>1918</td>
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<td>Heroic Smile</td>
<td>1919</td>
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<td>Meditation at Lagunitas</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<td>Sunrise</td>
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<td>The Yellow Bicycle</td>
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<td>Spring Drawing</td>
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Dry Root in a Wash 1925
A Story of How a Wall Stands 1926
Wind and Glacier Voices 1927
The Creation, According to Coyote 1928
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Grief 1929
The sky is brilliant 1929

Louise Glück (1943— )
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Gretel in Darkness 1932
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Palais des Arts 1933
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Mythic Fragment 1934
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Alberto Ríos (1952— )
At Kino Viejo, Mexico 1938
Carlos 1939
Mi Abejo 1940
Madre Sofia 1941
The Purpose of Altar Boys 1942
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Louise Erdrich (1954— )
Indian Boarding School: The Runaways 1945
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Richard Wright (1908–1960)
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Preface

During the past twenty years, the field of American literature has been going through one of the most exciting periods in its development as a discipline. Of the many changes in literary theory and in critical methods, the most significant advance affecting the teaching of American writing—and thereby anthologies of American literature—has been the discovery and rediscovery of important works that had received little critical attention in the past. For the most part, these newly valued texts are by women writers and members of ethnic and racial minority groups whose works had been misunderstood, overlooked, or consciously rejected by the professors who were in positions to make such decisions, most of whom were themselves male and primarily interested in the English heritage of American literature. Thus, for example, anthologies always used to begin with the writings of the English Puritans who came to what was referred to as a "new world." One recent shift has been the recognition that long before the English arrived in the land now called America, that land had been inhabited for centuries by peoples who possessed rich and complex literary cultures that form part of American literature. Before the English arrived, explorers from Spain, Italy, and other parts of the world had also left a literary record of their encounters with this land and its peoples. Today’s literature courses and anthologies present these earlier writings as more accurate beginnings of American literature.

Whereas the list of writers and texts in American literature has grown substantially as a result of these new attitudes, the number of weeks in each semester and the number of courses in college curricula allotted for the teaching of the subject have not expanded. Teachers in the field would like more time to do justice to the established writers such as Emerson, Melville, James, and Faulkner, whose works have long been studied. Concurrently, they want to introduce students to the many rewarding texts by writers such as Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Emma Lazarus, Charles W. Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B. Du Bois, to note a few examples from the 1880s and 1890s alone. To accommodate these desires, anthology editors have been producing longer and longer texts. In 1974 a standard collection of this kind was about 1700 pages per volume; the most recent anthologies have been approaching 3000 pages per volume. Teachers lament that they are overwhelmed by the huge number of choices to be made and frustrated by the hundreds of pages to be covered in a given year. The large physical size of the books has even become an inconvenience, and in some cases the efforts of publishers to produce smaller books has led to the use of very thin paper and a reduced typeface that makes reading the texts difficult.