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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>List of Plates</i>	ix
<i>Editor's Preface</i>	xi
<i>Map</i>	xii
1. Terms of a tradition	1
Discovery and settlement; A new Eden and the American Dream; Huckleberry Finn and his kind; The Dream and the past; The frontier.	
2. The colonies	15
Pilgrims and Puritans; Voices of dissent; The Mather dynasty; Personal narratives; Bradstreet, Wigglesworth and Taylor; The Enlightenment and the Great Awakening; Jonathan Edwards and other individualists; The South.	
3. The revolution	32
Benjamin Franklin; Thomas Jefferson; Poetry; The novel.	
4. The waiting poem	43
Irving, Bryant and Cooper; Poe.	
5. Renaissance	55
Humourists and Brahmins; The Transcendentalists; Emerson and Thoreau; Hawthorne; Melville; Walt Whitman and the Civil War	
6. Realisms	80
Regionalists; Imaginary worlds and wishful thinking; Twain; 'Real Life'; Henry James; Women, war and money; Gopher Prairie and West Egg.	

7. Modernisms	116
Emily Dickinson; Henry Adams and the dynamics of the modern world; Native voices in poetry; Making it new; T. S. Eliot: alienation and language; Hart Crane; e. e. cummings; Reality and imagination; The rise of American drama; O'Neill; Realism and protest in the novel; Hemingway; The South; Faulkner; The Nashville Fugitives; Robert Penn Warren.	
8. War and post-war	168
The war in fiction; Civilian themes in the pre-war generation of novelists; John Cheever; Other specialists; J. D. Salinger; William Burroughs; Walker Percy and Truman Capote; John Updike; Humour and satire; De Vries and Condon; Kurt Vonnegut; Science fiction; Drama after 1940 – Williams and Miller; Poetry, personality and politics; Beat poets; Berryman and Lowell.	
9. Diversity	222
Civil Rights and Black writing; Black poets; Fiction by women; Poetry by women; Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath; Mary Oliver; Jewish novelists; Saul Bellow; E. L. Doctorow; Barth, Pynchon, Gardner and Kennedy; Recent American theatre: Albee and after; Sam Shepard; Mind and language in recent poetry.	
<i>Chronological table</i>	281
<i>Further reading</i>	305
<i>Index</i>	309

TO NORA K. WALKER
AND IN MEMORY OF
HAROLD WALKER

This book is not written for the over-fed.
It is written for men who have not been able
to afford an university education or for young
men, whether or not threatened with universities,
who want to know more at the age of fifty than
I know today, and whom I might conceivably aid
to that object. I am fully aware of the dangers
inherent in attempting such utility to them.

Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*

Acknowledgements for the Second Edition

My chief obligation is to Stephanie Clark of the University of Waikato library. My thanks go also to her colleague, Geraldine Hay, for help with inter-library loans. Dr Lewis Fretz of the University of Waikato's Department of Politics has given invaluable advice on historical content. Alan J. Clark of Oxford has been generous in suggesting improvements to my account of the Nashville Fugitives. Once again I am especially indebted to Sonia Wells for her skill and endurance in preparing the new typescript, and grateful to Sue Cope for her scrupulous editing.

For encouragement, understanding and support over many years I thank Dr and Mrs J. R. F. Buchanan.

In revising this book for a second edition I have been guided by helpful criticism of the first edition. Some writers who fared poorly in the competition for space are now more amply represented. More coverage is given to drama and to science fiction. There are fuller discussions of work by Black and Jewish writers and of writing by women.

List of plates

1. Emily Dickinson. Facsimile of 'Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers'. (Boston Public Library)
2. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*. Facsimile of title page for the 1891–2 edition
3. *Beauchamp's Confession*. Facsimile of title page
4. Grant Wood, 'American Gothic', 1930. (Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois)
5. 'World's Highest Standard of Living'. Louisville, Kentucky, February 1937. (Photo by Margaret Bourke-White. Courtesy of *Life*, Time Inc.)
6. 'Rowan Oak', William Faulkner's home near Oxford, Mississippi. (Marshall Walker)
7. 'This is a Pile of Junk'. A disappointed consumer makes his protest at a cross-roads in Georgia, August 1969. (Marshall Walker)
8. Lipstick at the Beinecke Research Library. Protest, Ivy League style, by Yale undergraduates. (Marshall Walker)
9. Tom Wesselmann, *Great American Nude no. 99*, 1968. (Collection Morton G. Newman, Chicago, Illinois)
10. Norman Rockwell. 'A Family Tree' *Saturday Evening Post* cover, October 24, 1959. (*Saturday Evening Post*, 1916–63, Curtis Publishing Company)
11. Thoreau. Title page of first edition, 'Walden'
12. Frederick E. Church, 'Twilight in the Wilderness', 1860. (Courtesy of Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. Mr and Mrs William H. Marlatt Fund)
13. Albert Bierstadt. 'Lake Tahoe', 1868. (Courtesy of Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Gift of Mr and Mrs Frederick H. Curtiss)
14. Norman Rockwell, 'Breaking Home Ties', *Saturday Evening Post* cover, September 25, 1954.
15. Birmingham, Alabama, May 1963. Martin Luther King's demonstrators are pressed to the wall by police fire hoses. (Charles Moore. Courtesy of Black Star)
16. The five principal Fugitives, at the Fugitive Reunion, Nashville, Tennessee, May 4, 1956. (Photograph by Rob Roy Purdy)
17. Atlanta, Georgia. Modern Atlanta rises from the red earth of Georgia. (Marshall Walker)
18. Roy Lichtenstein, 'Okay, Hot Shot, Okay', 1963. (Collection R. Morone, Turin, Italy).

Editor's Preface

THE study of literature requires knowledge of contexts as well as texts. What kind of person wrote the poem, the play, the novel, the essay? What forces acted upon them as they wrote? What was the historical, the political, the philosophical, the economic, the cultural background? Was the writer accepting or rejecting the literary conventions of the time, or developing them, or creating entirely new kinds of literary expression? Are there interactions between literature and the art, music or architecture of its period? Was the writer affected by contemporaries or isolated?

Such questions stress the need for students to go beyond the reading of set texts, to extend their knowledge by developing a sense of chronology, of action and reaction, and of the varying relationships between writers and society.

Histories of literature can encourage students to make comparisons, can aid in understanding the purposes of individual authors and in assessing the totality of their achievements. Their development can be better understood and appreciated with some knowledge of the background of their time. And histories of literature, apart from their valuable function as reference books, can demonstrate the great wealth of writing in English that is there to be enjoyed. They can guide the reader who wishes to explore it more fully and to gain in the process deeper insights into the rich diversity not only of literature but of human life itself.

A. NORMAN JEFFARES

The United States of America. Map © Macmillan Edu

— International Boundaries

- - - State Boundaries

— Major Roads

■ Capital City

● State Capitals

○ Other Important Towns

200 0 200 400 Kilometres
100 0 100 200 Miles