

# **MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE**

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**Volume I • A–G  
Fifth Edition**

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AMERICAN  
LITERATURE**

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## FOREWORD TO THE FIFTH EDITION

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This new edition of *Modern American Literature* represents a significant advancement in the series. These volumes collate all entries from the original three volumes of the fourth edition, published in 1960, with entries from the three supplements published in 1976, 1985, and 1997, so that all excerpts on a given author now appear in one place. Seventy new entries have been added, bringing the total number of authors discussed to 489, and bibliographies for all authors have been updated. In addition, the format has been simplified. Citations for journal articles now include the full source title, eliminating the need for the abbreviation key used in previous editions, and bibliographies now immediately follow author entries, rather than appearing in a separate section at the back of the book.

The compilers of this edition have built upon the notable efforts of previous editors, each of whom made significant contributions and additions. As in the past, entrants in the series, as well as the sources chosen for excerpting, have been carefully selected to provide broad and instructive overviews of the most significant authors of the modern period in American literature. New authors for this edition have been selected not only on the basis of their prominence but also on their presence in the contemporary curriculum. The richly diverse nature of American letters is reflected in the wide variety of genres represented, from the humorous contemporary tales of Andrei Codrescu to the contemplative nature essays of Annie Dillard to the literary and philosophical speculations of George Steiner. In addition, a concerted effort was made to broaden the cultural scope of the series by presenting discussion of the works of black, Hispanic, and Native American authors, including a number from earlier in this century whose works have until recently been undervalued or ignored, figures such as William Stanley Braithwaite, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, and Alain Locke. As in previous editions, every effort has been made to cull from brief reviews as well as lengthy critical evaluations, and from a wide variety of critical perspectives, showing wherever possible the evolution of an author's reputation and stature.

The function of this work continues to be the illumination of the works of American authors through the presentation of significant analyses. With its greater focus on multicultural authors and its streamlined format, this new edition will be even more useful to students and other researchers seeking critical perspectives on the most significant American writers of the twentieth century.

The editors would like to thank the many individuals and publishers who have generously granted permission to reprint their materials here.

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