

norton anthology of african american literature

norton anthology of african american literature is a landmark publication that has significantly shaped the study and appreciation of African American literary heritage. This comprehensive anthology brings together a wide range of voices, genres, and historical periods, offering readers and scholars an unparalleled resource for understanding the richness and diversity of African American literature. From early slave narratives to modern poetry and contemporary fiction, the Norton Anthology of African American Literature provides insightful context, critical introductions, and influential works that have defined the African American experience in the United States. In this article, we will explore the origins, structure, impact, notable authors, and key themes present in the anthology. Whether you are a student, educator, researcher, or literature enthusiast, this guide will offer a thorough overview of why the Norton Anthology of African American Literature is essential for anyone interested in African American culture and literary studies.

- Origins and Historical Background of the Norton Anthology
- Structure and Organization of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature
- Major Themes in African American Literature
- Notable Authors and Works Included in the Anthology
- The Impact on Education and Literary Scholarship
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Origins and Historical Background of the Norton Anthology

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature was first published in 1997, marking a significant milestone in the recognition and study of African American literary achievements. The anthology was developed by an esteemed editorial team led by Henry Louis Gates Jr., along with Nellie Y. McKay and other leading scholars in African American studies. Their ambition was to create a definitive collection that would represent the breadth and evolution of African American writing from the colonial era to the present day. This monumental project responded to a growing demand for resources that accurately depict the cultural, social, and political contributions of Black writers in American literature.

Since its initial release, the Norton Anthology of African American Literature has undergone several revisions and expansions, incorporating new scholarship and emerging voices. Its historical background reflects the

ongoing struggle for representation, authenticity, and recognition within the literary canon. The anthology's editors carefully selected works that not only showcase artistic excellence but also illuminate the complex history of African Americans in the United States.

Structure and Organization of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature

Chronological Arrangement

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature is organized chronologically, guiding readers through the major periods of African American literary expression. This structure allows for a clear understanding of how historical contexts—such as slavery, Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement, and contemporary times—influenced the evolution of literature and thought.

Genres and Forms

The anthology includes a diverse range of literary genres, highlighting the versatility of African American writers. Readers will encounter poetry, fiction, drama, nonfiction, essays, autobiographies, slave narratives, speeches, and folk literature. Each genre is presented with contextual introductions that explain its significance and unique characteristics within African American culture.

- **Poetry:** From Phillis Wheatley to Amiri Baraka, showcasing lyrical innovation and social commentary.
- **Fiction:** Novels and short stories by authors like Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright.
- **Drama:** Influential plays by Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, and Suzan-Lori Parks.
- **Nonfiction:** Essays, memoirs, and speeches by Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and others.
- **Slave Narratives:** First-person accounts that document the realities of slavery and the quest for freedom.

Editorial Introductions and Contextual Materials

Each section and major author is introduced with scholarly essays that provide historical, cultural, and literary context. These materials are invaluable for understanding the circumstances under which each work was created and its relevance to broader social movements. The editorial apparatus, including timelines, glossaries, and explanatory notes, further enriches the reader's experience and comprehension.

Major Themes in African American Literature

Identity and Self-Expression

One of the central themes throughout the Norton Anthology of African American Literature is the exploration of identity. Writers grapple with questions of race, individuality, and collective belonging, often navigating complex intersections of culture, heritage, and personal experience. Works in the anthology highlight how African American authors have forged new literary identities in response to historical oppression and cultural erasure.

Freedom, Resistance, and Social Justice

The theme of resistance against injustice is deeply embedded in African American literature. Slave narratives, abolitionist essays, and modern protest poems articulate the ongoing struggle for freedom, equality, and civil rights. The anthology documents the role of literature in galvanizing social change and challenging dominant narratives.

Memory, History, and the Power of Storytelling

African American writers frequently use literature as a means of preserving memory and reclaiming history. Through storytelling, authors reconstruct lost or suppressed histories, memorialize personal and communal experiences, and assert agency over the narrative of Black life in America. Folklore, oral traditions, and autobiographical writing are prominent features in the anthology.

Notable Authors and Works Included in the Anthology

Early Voices and Slave Narratives

The Norton Anthology features pioneering figures such as Phillis Wheatley, the first published African American poet, and Frederick Douglass, whose autobiography remains a foundational text in American literature. Slave narratives by Harriet Jacobs and others provide firsthand accounts of the brutality of slavery and the resilience of the human spirit.

The Harlem Renaissance

The anthology devotes significant attention to the Harlem Renaissance, a flourishing period of Black artistic and intellectual achievement in the

1920s and 1930s. Key authors include Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, and Jean Toomer, whose works encapsulate the vibrancy, innovation, and complexity of this era.

Modern and Contemporary Writers

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature includes influential twentieth-century and contemporary writers such as Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Maya Angelou. Their works reflect evolving themes of identity, race relations, gender, and spirituality, shaping the landscape of American literature.

The Impact on Education and Literary Scholarship

Transforming Literary Curricula

The publication of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature transformed literary studies by legitimizing the inclusion of Black writers in academic curricula. Universities, colleges, and schools across the nation adopted the anthology as a core text, broadening students' exposure to diverse literary traditions and perspectives.

Advancing Scholarship and Research

The anthology's comprehensive scope and scholarly apparatus have made it an indispensable tool for research in African American studies. Its extensive bibliographies, critical essays, and historical documents provide a foundation for further investigation into the lives, works, and legacies of African American authors.

Using the Norton Anthology for Study and Teaching

Classroom Applications

Educators use the Norton Anthology to design courses on African American literature, history, and culture. The structured organization and rich contextual materials support lesson planning, reading assignments, and classroom discussions. The anthology's selections foster critical thinking, analytical writing, and appreciation for literary diversity.

1. Assign readings from different historical periods for comparative analysis.
2. Use contextual essays to frame classroom debates about race, identity,

and representation.

3. Encourage students to engage with primary texts and respond through essays and creative projects.
4. Incorporate multimedia resources, such as audio recordings and film adaptations, to enhance understanding.

Student Resources

Students benefit from the anthology's glossary of literary terms, study questions, and annotated bibliographies. These resources help clarify complex concepts, guide research projects, and deepen engagement with the material. The Norton Anthology is frequently recommended for exam preparation and independent study.

Recent Editions and Updates

Expanded Content and New Voices

Recent editions of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature have expanded to include emerging authors, contemporary poets, and new scholarship on previously underrepresented voices. The editorial team continues to revise introductions, update annotations, and add works that reflect the evolving landscape of African American literary production.

Digital and Accessibility Enhancements

The anthology is now available in digital formats, increasing accessibility for students and educators. Enhanced e-book platforms offer interactive features, audio recordings, and supplementary materials. These updates ensure that the Norton Anthology remains a relevant and vital resource in the digital age.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Ongoing editorial revisions underscore the anthology's commitment to representing the full spectrum of African American voices, including women writers, LGBTQ authors, and literary innovators from all regions of the United States. This dedication to diversity strengthens the anthology's status as an authoritative reference for both scholarly and general audiences.

Trending and Relevant Questions and Answers about Norton Anthology of African American Literature

Q: What is the Norton Anthology of African American Literature?

A: The Norton Anthology of African American Literature is a comprehensive collection of literary works by African American writers, spanning from the colonial era to contemporary times. It includes poetry, fiction, essays, drama, and slave narratives, with critical introductions and contextual materials.

Q: Who are the main editors of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature?

A: The principal editors are Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay, along with a distinguished team of scholars specializing in African American studies and literature.

Q: Why is the Norton Anthology of African American Literature important in academia?

A: It is essential because it legitimizes African American literature within academic curricula, provides a broad and inclusive representation of Black voices, and serves as a foundational resource for scholarship and teaching.

Q: What kinds of works are included in the anthology?

A: The anthology features a diverse array of genres, including poetry, fiction, drama, nonfiction, essays, autobiographies, speeches, and slave narratives, representing various historical periods and literary movements.

Q: How has the Norton Anthology of African American Literature evolved over time?

A: The anthology has expanded with each edition to include new authors, updated scholarship, and enhanced digital features, reflecting ongoing developments in African American literary studies.

Q: Which notable authors can be found in the Norton Anthology?

A: Prominent authors include Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, and many others.

Q: How is the Norton Anthology of African American Literature used in classrooms?

A: Educators use the anthology for teaching African American literature, history, and culture, assigning readings, facilitating discussions, and supporting analytical and creative assignments.

Q: What themes are commonly explored in the anthology's selections?

A: Common themes include identity, self-expression, resistance to injustice, social justice, memory, history, and the power of storytelling.

Q: Are there digital versions of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature?

A: Yes, recent editions are available in digital formats, offering interactive features and increased accessibility for students and teachers.

Q: How does the Norton Anthology contribute to diversity and inclusion in literature?

A: The anthology's editorial team is committed to representing a wide range of voices, including women, LGBTQ authors, and regional diversity, making it a vital resource for understanding the full scope of African American literary achievement.

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Delving into the Norton Anthology of African American Literature: A Comprehensive Guide

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature stands as a monumental achievement, a sprawling tapestry woven from centuries of voices, experiences, and artistic expression. This comprehensive guide will explore its significance, its contents, its impact, and its ongoing relevance in understanding American history and culture. We'll dissect its structure, examine its critical

reception, and consider its role in shaping the literary canon. Prepare to embark on a journey through a rich and complex literary landscape.

The Genesis and Scope of the Anthology

First published in 1997, and subsequently updated in 2014, the Norton Anthology of African American Literature is more than just a collection of writings; it's a carefully curated exploration of African American literary history. Editors Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay assembled a breathtaking array of works, spanning centuries and encompassing a diverse range of genres, from poetry and short stories to essays, drama, and speeches. This wasn't simply a matter of gathering texts; it was a conscious effort to reshape the narrative of American literature, highlighting the significant, often overlooked, contributions of African American writers. The anthology's scope extends from the earliest known writings by African Americans to contemporary works, providing a chronological journey through the evolution of African American literary expression.

The Chronological Approach and its Significance

The chronological arrangement of the anthology is crucial to understanding its impact. By presenting the works in their historical context, readers gain a deeper appreciation for the social, political, and cultural forces that shaped the writing. This chronological journey reveals how literary styles, themes, and concerns evolved in response to historical events like slavery, emancipation, the Civil Rights Movement, and beyond. It's a powerful testament to the resilience and adaptability of the African American literary voice.

Genre Diversity and Authorial Representation

The anthology boasts remarkable diversity in terms of genre and authorial representation. It showcases the breadth and depth of African American literary talent, featuring established literary giants alongside lesser-known but equally important voices. This inclusion is intentional, aiming to dismantle the monolithic image of African American literature and present a multifaceted reality. Readers will encounter a wide spectrum of perspectives, styles, and experiences, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of the community it represents.

Critical Reception and Lasting Impact

Since its initial publication, the Norton Anthology of African American Literature has received both widespread acclaim and some scholarly debate. While many praise its comprehensive scope and its contribution to a more inclusive literary canon, others have pointed to potential biases in selection

and interpretation. These debates highlight the inherent challenges in compiling such a vast and significant collection, showcasing the complexities of creating a representative anthology. Nonetheless, its impact on literary studies, classrooms, and the broader cultural landscape is undeniable.

Its Influence on Literary Education

The anthology has become a cornerstone of African American literature courses across the nation and internationally. Its influence on literary education is profound, shaping the way students and scholars understand American literature and its diverse voices. By making these works readily accessible, it has democratized access to this vital body of literature, allowing a wider audience to engage with its richness and complexity.

Shaping the Narrative of American History

Beyond its academic significance, the Norton Anthology of African American Literature plays a crucial role in shaping our understanding of American history itself. The writings contained within offer powerful firsthand accounts of slavery, racism, oppression, and the ongoing struggle for equality. These narratives challenge dominant historical narratives, offering alternative perspectives and illuminating the experiences of a marginalized community.

Beyond the Pages: Engaging with the Anthology

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature is not simply a collection of texts to be passively consumed; it's a dynamic resource to be actively engaged with. Students and readers are encouraged to explore the various critical essays and introductions included in the anthology, enriching their understanding of the historical context and literary significance of the works. Further research into the lives and works of the individual authors will further deepen one's appreciation of this remarkable collection.

Conclusion

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature is an indispensable resource for anyone seeking to understand the depth, breadth, and complexity of African American literary tradition. Its careful curation, chronological approach, and commitment to inclusivity make it a vital contribution to the literary landscape. It's a testament to the power of literature to illuminate history, challenge assumptions, and foster understanding across cultures. By engaging with this anthology, readers not only deepen their literary appreciation but also gain valuable insights into the ongoing conversation

about race, identity, and the American experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What makes the Norton Anthology of African American Literature unique?

A1: Its uniqueness lies in its comprehensive scope, covering centuries of writing and representing a wide range of genres and authors. The chronological organization and inclusion of critical essays provide crucial context for understanding the evolution of African American literary expression.

Q2: Is this anthology suitable for beginners?

A2: Yes, while it's a comprehensive work, the anthology's structure and inclusion of introductory materials make it accessible to readers of all levels. Beginners can start with specific authors or time periods that interest them.

Q3: Are there any criticisms of the anthology?

A3: Some critics have questioned the selection process and potential biases in representation. These debates highlight the inherent challenges of compiling such a vast and complex collection while striving for comprehensive representation.

Q4: Where can I purchase the Norton Anthology of African American Literature?

A4: The anthology is widely available at bookstores, both online (Amazon, Barnes & Noble) and in physical locations. You can also find used copies at a lower price.

Q5: How can I use this anthology for research?

A5: The anthology serves as a superb primary source for research on African American literature, history, and culture. Its comprehensive nature and extensive notes allow for in-depth study and analysis of individual works and their historical context.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* Henry Louis Gates (Jr.), Valerie Smith, 2014 An exciting revision of the best-selling anthology for African American literary survey courses.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* Henry Louis Gates, Nellie Y. McKay, 2004 Welcomed on publication as brilliant, definitive, and a joy to teach from, The Norton Anthology of African American Literature was adopted at more than 1,275 colleges and universities worldwide. Now, the new Second Edition offers these highlights.

norton anthology of african american literature: **The Norton Anthology of African American Literature** , 1997

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* Henry Louis Gates (Jr.), Valerie Smith, 2014 An exciting revision of the best-selling anthology for African American literary survey courses.

norton anthology of african american literature: Bars Fight Lucy Terry Prince, 2020-10-01 Bars Fight, a ballad telling the tale of an ambush by Native Americans on two families in 1746 in a Massachusetts meadow, is the oldest known work by an African-American author. Passed on orally until it was recorded in Josiah Gilbert Holland's History of Western Massachusetts in 1855, the ballad is a landmark in the history of literature that should be on every book lover's shelves.

norton anthology of african american literature: Anthology of African American Literature Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 1997-10-10

norton anthology of african american literature: Half in Shadow Shanna Greene Benjamin, 2021-04-01 Nellie Y. McKay (1930–2006) was a pivotal figure in contemporary American letters. The author of several books, McKay is best known for coediting the canon-making with Henry Louis Gates Jr., which helped secure a place for the scholarly study of Black writing that had been ignored by white academia. However, there is more to McKay's life and legacy than her literary scholarship. After her passing, new details about McKay's life emerged, surprising everyone who knew her. Why did McKay choose to hide so many details of her past? Shanna Greene Benjamin examines McKay's path through the professoriate to learn about the strategies, sacrifices, and successes of contemporary Black women in the American academy. Benjamin shows that McKay's secrecy was a necessary tactic that a Black, working-class woman had to employ to succeed in the white-dominated space of the American English department. Using extensive archives and personal correspondence, Benjamin brings together McKay's private life and public work to expand how we think about Black literary history and the place of Black women in American culture.

norton anthology of african american literature: *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man* Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 2011-06-08 This is a book of stories, writes Henry Louis Gates, and all might be described as 'narratives of ascent.' As some remarkable men talk about their lives, many perspectives on race and gender emerge. For the notion of the unitary black man, Gates argues, is as imaginary as the creature that the poet Wallace Stevens conjured in his poem Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird. James Baldwin, Colin Powell, Harry Belafonte, Bill T. Jones, Louis Farrakhan, Anatole Broyard, Albert Murray -- all these men came from modest circumstances and all achieved preeminence. They are people, Gates writes, who have shaped the world as much as they were shaped by it, who gave as good as they got. Three are writers -- James Baldwin, who was once regarded as the intellectual spokesman for the black community; Anatole Broyard, who chose to hide his black heritage so as to be seen as a writer on his own terms; and Albert Murray, who rose to the pinnacle of literary criticism. There is the general-turned-political-figure Colin Powell, who discusses his interactions with three United States presidents; there is Harry Belafonte, the entertainer whose career has been distinct from his fervent activism; there is Bill T. Jones, dancer and choreographer, whose fierce courage and creativity have continued in the shadow of AIDS; and there is Louis Farrakhan, the controversial religious leader. These men and others speak of their lives with candor and intimacy, and what emerges from this portfolio of influential men is a strikingly varied and profound set of ideas about what it means to be a black man in America today.

norton anthology of african american literature: The Norton Anthology of American Literature Nina Baym, 2003 Includes outstanding works of American poetry, prose, and fiction from the Colonial era to the present day.

norton anthology of african american literature: Kindred Octavia E. Butler, 2004-02-01 From the New York Times bestselling author of Parable of the Sower and MacArthur "Genius" Grant, Nebula, and Hugo award winner The visionary time-travel classic whose Black female hero is pulled through time to face the horrors of American slavery and explores the impacts of racism, sexism, and white supremacy then and now. "I lost an arm on my last trip home. My left arm." Dana's torment begins when she suddenly vanishes on her 26th birthday from California, 1976, and is dragged through time to antebellum Maryland to rescue a boy named Rufus, heir to a slaveowner's plantation. She soon realizes the purpose of her summons to the past: protect Rufus to ensure his assault of her Black ancestor so that she may one day be born. As she endures the traumas of slavery and the soul-crushing normalization of savagery, Dana fights to keep her

autonomy and return to the present. Blazing the trail for neo-slavery narratives like Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* and Ta-Nehisi Coates's *The Water Dancer*, Butler takes one of speculative fiction's oldest tropes and infuses it with lasting depth and power. Dana not only experiences the cruelties of slavery on her skin but also grimly learns to accept it as a condition of her own existence in the present. "Where stories about American slavery are often gratuitous, reducing its horror to explicit violence and brutality, *Kindred* is controlled and precise" (New York Times). "Reading Octavia Butler taught me to dream big, and I think it's absolutely necessary that everybody have that freedom and that willingness to dream." —N. K. Jemisin Developed for television by writer/executive producer Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (*Watchmen*), executive producers also include Joe Weisberg and Joel Fields (*The Americans*, *The Patient*), and Darren Aronofsky (*The Whale*). Janicza Bravo (*Zola*) is director and an executive producer of the pilot. *Kindred* stars Mallori Johnson, Micah Stock, Ryan Kwanten, and Gayle Rankin.

norton anthology of african american literature: *Sweetgum & Lightning* Rodney Terich Leonard, 2021-02-15 An intersection of jazz and the written word: poems to be experienced and felt *Sweetgum & Lightning* lets us into an extraordinary poetic universe, shaped by a vernacular rooted in the language of self, one's origins, and music. In poems that are deeply sensual in nature, Rodney Terich Leonard considers gender and sexuality, art, poverty, and community. Imagery expands through unexpected lexical associations and rumination on the function of language; words take on new meaning and specificity, and the music of language becomes tantamount to the denotations of words themselves. Through extensive webs of connotation, Leonard's narratives achieve a sense of accuracy and intimacy. The nuanced lens of these poems is indicative of the honesty of expression at work in the collection—one that affirms the essentiality of perception to living and memory--

norton anthology of african american literature: The Norton Anthology of American Literature Baym, Nina, Levine, Robert S, 2011-12-31 The Eighth Edition features a diverse and balanced variety of works and thorough but judicious editorial apparatus throughout. The new edition also includes more complete works, much-requested new authors, 170 in-text images, new and re-thought contextual clusters, and other tools that help instructors teach the course they want to teach.

norton anthology of african american literature: The Concise Oxford Companion to African American Literature William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster, Trudier Harris, 2001-02-15 A breathtaking achievement, this Concise Companion is a suitable crown to the astonishing production in African American literature and criticism that has swept over American literary studies in the last two decades. It offers an enormous range of writers—from Sojourner Truth to Frederick Douglass, from Zora Neale Hurston to Ralph Ellison, and from Toni Morrison to August Wilson. It contains entries on major works (including synopses of novels), such as Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. It also incorporates information on literary characters such as Bigger Thomas, Coffin Ed Johnson, Kunta Kinte, Sula Peace, as well as on character types such as Aunt Jemima, Brer Rabbit, John Henry, Stackolee, and the trickster. Icons of black culture are addressed, including vivid details about the lives of Muhammad Ali, John Coltrane, Marcus Garvey, Jackie Robinson, John Brown, and Harriet Tubman. Here, too, are general articles on poetry, fiction, and drama; on autobiography, slave narratives, Sunday School literature, and oratory; as well as on a wide spectrum of related topics. Compact yet thorough, this handy volume gathers works from a vast array of sources—from the black periodical press to women's clubs—making it one of the most substantial guides available on the growing, exciting world of African American literature.

norton anthology of african american literature: The Norton Anthology of American Literature Robert Steven Levine, 2017 This 9th edition of 'The Norton Anthology of American Literature' presents complete major works, balancing classic and newly emergent works

norton anthology of african american literature: The Black Arts Enterprise and the Production of African American Poetry Howard Rambsy, 2013-08-29 Devoted chiefly to the period from 1965-1976.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Lottery* Shirley Jackson, 2008 A seemingly ordinary village participates in a yearly lottery to determine a sacrificial victim.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature: Realism, naturalism, modernism to the present. The vernacular tradition, part 2. Gospel ; Songs of social change ; Jazz ; Rhythm and blues ; Hip-hop ; Sermons and prayers* Henry Louis Gates (Jr.), Valerie Smith, 2014 Collaborating on *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, editors Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay have compiled what may be the definitive collection of its kind. Organized chronologically, the massive work gathers writings from six periods of black history: slavery and freedom; Reconstruction; the Harlem Renaissance; Realism, Naturalism and Modernism; the Black Arts Movement and the period since the 1970s. The work begins with the vernacular tradition of spirituals, gospel and the blues; continues through work songs, jazz and rap; ranges through sermons and folktales; and embraces letters and journals, poetry, short fiction, novels, autobiography and drama.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Literature of the American South* William L. Andrews, 1997-10-01 Complete with historical introductions, author headnotes, annotations, and bibliographies, a groundbreaking anthology encompasses all genres of literary writing and ranges from slave narratives to William Faulkner to the memoirs of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Original.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Earliest African American Literatures* Zachary McLeod Hutchins, Cassander L. Smith, 2021-12-16 With the publication of the 1619 Project by The New York Times in 2019, a growing number of Americans have become aware that Africans arrived in North America before the Pilgrims. Yet the stories of these Africans and their first descendants remain ephemeral and inaccessible for both the general public and educators. This groundbreaking collection of thirty-eight biographical and autobiographical texts chronicles the lives of literary black Africans in British colonial America from 1643 to 1760 and offers new strategies for identifying and interpreting the presence of black Africans in this early period. Brief introductions preceding each text provide historical context and genre-specific interpretive prompts to foreground their significance. Included here are transcriptions from manuscript sources and colonial newspapers as well as forgotten texts. *The Earliest African American Literatures* will change the way that students and scholars conceive of early American literature and the role of black Africans in the formation of that literature.

norton anthology of african american literature: *Sula* Toni Morrison, 2002-04-05 From the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner: Two girls who grow up to become women. Two friends who become something worse than enemies. This brilliantly imagined novel brings us the story of Nel Wright and Sula Peace, who meet as children in the small town of Medallion, Ohio. Nel and Sula's devotion is fierce enough to withstand bullies and the burden of a dreadful secret. It endures even after Nel has grown up to be a pillar of the black community and Sula has become a pariah. But their friendship ends in an unforgivable betrayal—or does it end? Terrifying, comic, ribald and tragic, *Sula* is a work that overflows with life.

norton anthology of african american literature: *The Cambridge History of African American Literature* Maryemma Graham, Jerry Washington Ward, 2011-02-03 A major new history of the literary traditions, oral and print, of African-descended peoples in the United States.

norton anthology of african american literature: *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart Concise One-Volume, 2nd Edition + Reg Card* Elizabeth Pollard, Clifford D. Rosenberg, Robert L. Tignor, Jeremy Adelman, Stephen Aron, Peter Brown, Benjamin Elman, Stephen Kotkin, Xinru Liu, Suzanne Marchand, Holly Pittman, Gyan Prakash, Brent Shaw, Michael Tsin, 2019 A truly global approach to world history, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* is organized around major world history stories and themes: the emergence of cities, the building of the Silk Road, the spread of major religions, the spread of the Black Death, the Age of Exploration, alternatives to nineteenth-century capitalism, the rise of modern nation-states and empires, and others ... The authors have refreshed throughout coverage of the environment in addition to cutting edge scholarship, designed to help

students think critically, master content and make connections across time and place.--Provided by publisher.

norton anthology of african american literature: On the Bus with Rosa Parks: Poems Rita Dove, 2000-04-17 A dazzling new collection by the former Poet Laureate of the United States. In these brilliant poems, Rita Dove treats us to a panoply of human endeavor, shot through with the electrifying jazz of her lyric elegance. From the opening sequence, Cameos, to the civil rights struggle of the final sequence, she explores the intersection of individual fate and history.

norton anthology of african american literature: Passing Nella Larsen, 2022 Harlem Renaissance author Nella Larsen (1891 -1964) published just two novels and three short stories in her lifetime, but achieved lasting literary acclaim. Her classic novel *Passing* first appeared in 1926.

norton anthology of african american literature: The Geographies of African American Short Fiction Kenton Rambsy, 2022-03-25 Perhaps the brevity of short fiction accounts for the relatively scant attention devoted to it by scholars, who have historically concentrated on longer prose narratives. *The Geographies of African American Short Fiction* seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the ways African American short story writers plotted a diverse range of characters across multiple locations—small towns, a famous metropolis, city sidewalks, a rural wooded area, apartment buildings, a pond, a general store, a prison, and more. In the process, these writers highlighted the extents to which places and spaces shaped or situated racial representations. Presenting African American short story writers as cultural cartographers, author Kenton Rambsy documents the variety of geographical references within their short stories to show how these authors make cultural spaces integral to their artwork and inscribe their stories with layered and resonant social histories. The history of these short stories also documents the circulation of compositions across dozens of literary collections for nearly a century. Anthology editors solidified the significance of a core group of short story authors including James Baldwin, Toni Cade Bambara, Charles Chesnutt, Ralph Ellison, Zora Neale Hurston, and Richard Wright. Using quantitative information and an extensive literary dataset, *The Geographies of African American Short Fiction* explores how editorial practices shaped the canon of African American short fiction.

norton anthology of african american literature: What Was African American Literature? Kenneth W. Warren, 2011-05-03 African American literature is over. With this provocative claim Kenneth Warren sets out to identify a distinctly African American literature—and to change the terms with which we discuss it. Rather than contest other definitions, Warren makes a clear and compelling case for understanding African American literature as creative and critical work written by black Americans within and against the strictures of Jim Crow America. Within these parameters, his book outlines protocols of reading that best make sense of the literary works produced by African American writers and critics over the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. In Warren's view, African American literature begged the question: what would happen to this literature if and when Jim Crow was finally overthrown? Thus, imagining a world without African American literature was essential to that literature. In support of this point, Warren focuses on three moments in the history of *Phylon*, an important journal of African American culture. In the dialogues *Phylon* documents, the question of whether race would disappear as an organizing literary category emerges as shared ground for critical and literary practice. Warren also points out that while scholarship by black Americans has always been the province of a petit bourgeois elite, the strictures of Jim Crow enlisted these writers in a politics that served the race as a whole. Finally, Warren's work sheds light on the current moment in which advocates of African American solidarity insist on a past that is more productively put behind us.

norton anthology of african american literature: The African Americans Henry Louis Gates (Jr.), Donald Yacovone, 2013 Chronicles five hundred years of African-American history from the origins of slavery on the African continent through Barack Obama's second presidential term, examining contributing political and cultural events.

norton anthology of african american literature: The Norton Anthology of African American Literature: Beginnings through the Harlem Renaissance. The vernacular

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norton anthology of african american literature: The Norton Anthology of Poetry James Knapp, Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, 1996

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