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In this first edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* to appear in the twenty-first century, we respond to numerous requests for a more flexible, more portable format by introducing five individual volumes in two slipcase packages corresponding to the former Volumes 1 and 2. This new format accommodates the many instructors who use the anthology in a two-semester survey, but also opens up possibilities for mixing and matching the five volumes for a variety of courses organized by period or topic.

As with earlier editions, the editors have worked closely with teachers who design the book and, through these teachers, with the students who use it. From the anthology's inception, three goals have been paramount: first, to present a variety of works rich and substantial enough to enable teachers to build their own courses according to their own ideals (thus, teachers are offered more authors and more selections than they will probably choose to teach); second, to make the anthology self-sufficient by featuring many works in their entirety and longer selections so that individual authors can be covered in depth; and third, to balance traditional interests with developing critical concerns. This commitment to balance has been evident from the first edition of 1979, where, in response to teachers who found that the traditional canon was insufficiently representative of American literary history, we included Anne Bradstreet, Mary Rowlandson, Sarah Kemble Knight, Phillis Wheatley, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass, Sarah Orne Jewett, Kate Chopin, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Booker T. Washington, Charles Chesnut, Edith Wharton, W. E. B. Du Bois, and many others. Yet we did not shortchange writers like Franklin, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, or Faulkner, whom teachers then and now would not think of doing without.

That the "untraditional" authors listed above have now become part of the American literary canon shows that canons are not fixed, but emerge and change. At the same time, teachers over the last thirty years have seen a striking expansion in the extent and diversity of the authors they are expected to teach. In endeavoring to ensure that our inclusions—extensive as they are—do not outrun what might conceivably be of use in the classroom, we have always revised our selections in response to detailed suggestions from many teachers. For this Sixth Edition, we have drawn on the careful commentary of 111 reviewers. We are delighted with the new materials we bring to this Sixth Edition, which take several forms:

Volume A: Under the new rubric *Literature to 1700*, for the opening section, we incorporate Native American and explorer materials with settler literature up