Contents

Longman Literature in English Series viii
Editor's Preface x
Author's Preface xi
Acknowledgements xiii

1 Backgrounds: America, The Poem, and The Twentieth Century 1

America the poem: ideas of America and its writing 1
America's poets: formative figures for the twentieth
century 19
America and modernism: new readings of reality 29
America and 'revolution': new frontiers for art 38

The Modernist Experiment: Imagism, Objectivism, and some Major Innovators 49

Imagism: the social and cultural situation 49
The significance of Imagism 52
From Imagism to Objectivism or Dream: H. D., Zukofsky,
Oppen, Reznikoff, Niedecker, Fletcher, Aiken 57
From Imagism to the redemption of history: Pound 73
From Imagism to contact and community: Williams 82
From Imagism to discovery of the imagination: Stevens 88

In Search of a Past: the Fugitive Movement and the Major Traditionalists 101

Traditionalism: the social and cultural situation 101
The significance of the Fugitives 106
Traditionalism and the South: Ransom, Tate, Davidson,
Warren, J. P. Bishop, Berry, Dickey 109

Traditionalism outside the South: Winters, Cunningham, Eberhart 125

Traditionalism, scepticism, and tragedy: Frost 131
Traditionalism, quiet desperation, and belief: Robinson 138
Traditionalism, inhumanism, and prophecy: Jeffers 145

4 The Traditions of Whitman: Other Poets from between the Wars 157

The language of crisis and the language of Whitman: other aspects of the social and cultural situation between the wars 159

Whitman and the shape of American poetry 161 Whitman and American populism: Sandburg, Lindsay, Masters 162

Whitman and American radicalism: Rexroth, MacLeish, Fearing, Patchen 168

Whitman and American identity: Hughes, Johnson, Cullen, Tolson, Hayden, Brooks, and the question of black poetry 176

Whitman and American individualism: Moore, Wylie, Millay, Miles, Bogan, Adams 184

Whitman and American experimentalism: cummings 194 Whitman and American mysticism: Rukeyser, Riding, Crane 199

5 Formalists and Confessionals: American Poetry since the Second World War 214

From abundance to anger: the social and cultural tendencies of the first two decades after the war 214

From the mythological eye to the lonely 'I': a progress of American poetry since the war 218

Varieties of the personal: the self as dream, landscape, or confession 225

From formalism to freedom: a progress of American poetic techniques since the war 231

The imagination of commitment: a progress of American poetic themes since the war 238

The uses of formalism: Bishop, and others 243

The confessional 'I' as primitive: Roethke 247

The confessional 'I' as historian: Lowell 251

The confessional 'I' as martyr: Berryman 256

The confessional 'I' as prophetess: Plath 260

New formalists, new confessionals: recent departures 264

6 Beats, Prophets, and Aesthetes: American Poetry since the Second World War 273

From the public to the personal: social and cultural tendencies of the Sixties and after 273

Rediscovering the American voice: the Black Mountain poets (Olson, J. Williams, Levertov, Blackburn, Wieners, Creeley, Dorn, Duncan) 279

Restoring the American vision: the San Francisco poets (Ferlinghetti, Everson, Spicer, Lamantia, Whalen, McClure, Snyder) 291

Re-creating American rhythms: the Beat poets (Ginsberg, Corso) and Bukowski 299

Resurrecting the American rebel: black poetry (Baraka, Kaufman, Joans, Evans, Sanchez, Giovanni, Mahubuti, Karenga, Nelson) 307

Reinventing the American self: the New York poets (O'Hara, Guest, Schuyler, Berrigan, Koch, Ashbery) and Merrill 315 Postscript: America a poem 328

Appendix: The problem of literary nationality: the case of T. S. Eliot 336

Chronology 347

General Bibliographies 366

- (i) Bibliographies and reference guides 366
- (ii) Literary, historical and cultural backgrounds 367
- (iii) History and criticism 372
- (iv) Some useful anthologies 379

Individual Authors 381

Notes on biography, major works, and criticism 381

Index 420