The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Poetry comprises original essays by nineteen distinguished scholars. It offers a critical overview of major and emerging American poets of the twentieth century in addition to critical accounts of the representative schools, movements, regional settings, archival resources, and critical reception that define modern American poetry. The Companion stretches the narrow term of “literary modernism,” which encompasses works published from approximately 1890 to 1945, to include a more capacious and usable account of American poetry’s evolution from the twentieth century to the present. The essays collected here seek to account for modern American verse against the contexts of broad political, social, and cultural fields and forces. This volume gathers together major voices that represent the best in contemporary critical approaches and methods.

Walter Kalaidjian is professor and chair of the department of English at Emory University. He is the author of The Edge of Modernism: American Poetry and the Traumatic Past and editor of The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

Edited by

WALTER KALAIDJIAN

Emory University

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CONTENTS

List of Figures  page ix
Notes on Contributors  xi
Chronology  xv

Introduction  1
WALTER KALAIDJIAN

1 The Emergence of “The New Poetry”  11
JOHN TIMBERMAN NEWCOMB

2 Modern American Archives and Scrapbook Modernism  23
BARTHOLOMEW BRINKMAN

3 Experimental Modernisms  37
ALAN GOLING

4 The Legacy of New York  50
CARY NELSON

5 The Modern American Long Poem  65
ANNE DAY DEWEY

6 American Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance  77
JAMES SMETHURST

7 Objectivist Poetry and Poetics  89
RACHEL BLAŬ DУPLESSIS

8 American Poetry and the Popular Front  102
ALAN WALD
CONTENTS

9 Tracking the Fugitive Poets
   KIERAN QUINLAN 116

10 Mid-Century Modernism
   STEPHEN BURT 128

11 Psychotherapy and Confessional Poetry
   MICHAEL THURSTON 143

12 Black Mountain Poetry
   KAPLAN HARRIS 155

   MARIA DAMON 167

14 The Black Arts Movement and Black Aesthetics
   EVIE SHOCKLEY 180

15 New York School and American Surrealist Poetics
   EDWARD BRUNNER 196

16 Land, Place, and Nation: Toward an Indigenous American Poetics
   JANET MCADAMS 209

17 Transpacific and Asian American Counterpoetics
   YUNTE HUANG 223

18 Language Writing
   BARRETT WATTEN 234

19 Poet-Critics and Bureaucratic Administration
   EVAN KINDLEY 248

   Guide to Further Reading
   Index 259

   271
FIGURES

1 Edna St. Vincent Millay, “Rosemary” Scrapbook. Millay Papers Box 14, Library of Congress. page 24
2 Amy Lowell, The Private Scrap-Book. MS Lowell 38 (26), Houghton Library, Harvard University. 29
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

BARTHOLOMEW BRINKMAN is Assistant Professor of English at Framingham State University, where he specializes in modern American poetry, print culture, cultural studies, and digital humanities. He is currently completing a book project on poetic modernism in the culture of mass print and coedits with Cary Nelson the Modern American Poetry Site.

EDWARD BRUNNER is Professor of English at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. His most recent study is Cold War Poetry (2001). He teaches courses in modern poetry, popular culture, and graphic novels.

STEPHEN BURT is Professor of English at Harvard and the author of several books of criticism and poetry, among them The Forms of Youth: Twentieth-Century Poetry and Adolescence (2013) and, with David Mikics, The Art of the Sonnet (2011).

MARIA DAMON is Professor and Chair of the Department of Humanities and Media Studies at the Pratt Institute of Art. She is the author of The Dark End of the Street: Margins in American Vanguard Poetry (1993) and Postliterary America: From Bagel Shop Jazz to Micropoetries (2011) and the coeditor, with Ira Livingston, of Poetry and Cultural Studies: A Reader (2009).


RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS is the author of the long poem Drafts, spanning 1986 to 2012 (2013). She has written six critical books (from Cambridge, Iowa, and Alabama University Presses), coedited several anthologies, and published numerous articles on gender and poetics. DuPlessis edited The Selected Letters of George
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Oppen (1990), coedited The Objectivist Nexus (1999), and has written extensively on objectivist poets. She is Professor Emerita at Temple University.

Alan Golding teaches poetry and poetics at the University of Louisville. He is the author of From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry (1995) and of numerous essays on modernist and contemporary poetry. His current projects include Writing the New into History: Poetic Form and Social Formations in American Poetry, under contract with the University of Alabama Press, and “Isn’t the Avant-Garde Always Pedagogical,” a book on experimental poetics and / as pedagogy.

Kaplan Harris is Associate Professor of English at St. Bonaventure University. His recent work can be found in American Literature, Contemporary Literature, Paideuma, Postmodern Culture, Sagetrieb, and Poetry magazine, and he is finishing a book on poetry and activism in the wake of the New Left. He edited, with Rod Smith and Peter Baker, The Selected Letters of Robert Creeley (2014).

Yunte Huang is Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of Transpacific Displacement (2003), Transpacific Imaginations (2008), and others. His most recent book, Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History (2010), won the Edgar Award and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Walter Kalaidjian is Professor and Chair of the English department of Emory University. He is the author of Languages of Liberation: The Social Text in Contemporary American Poetry (1989), American Culture Between the Wars: Revisionary Modernism and Postmodern Critique (1993), and The Edge of Modernism: American Poetry and the Traumatic Past (2005). In addition, he is the editor of The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism (2005).

Evan Kindley is Visiting Assistant Professor at Claremont McKenna College. He is currently at work on a book manuscript entitled Critics and Connoisseurs: Poet-Critics and the Administration of Modernism and a critical biography of Hugh Kenner.


Cary Nelson is Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and formerly served as president of the American Association of University Professors. His many authored and edited books
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

include Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory, 1910–1945 (1989); Manifesto of a Tenured Radical (1997); Revolutionary Memory: Recovering the Poetry of the American Left (2001); and No University Is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom (2010).

JOHN TIMBERMAN NEWCOMB is Professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has published three books on American poetry: Wallace Stevens and Literary Canons (1992), Would Poetry Disappear? American Verse and the Crisis of Modernity (2004), and How Did Poetry Survive? The Making of Modern American Verse (2012).

KIERAN QUINLAN is Professor of English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His books to date are John Crowe Ransom’s Secular Faith (1989); Walker Percy, the Last Catholic Novelist (1996, 1998); and Strange Kin: Ireland and the American South (2005). He has just completed a study of Seamus Heaney and the decline of Irish Catholicism.

EVIE SHOCKLEY is Associate Professor of English at Rutgers University. She is the author of Renegade Poetics: Black Aesthetics and Formal Innovation in African American Poetry (2011), a critical study, as well as two books of poetry: the new black (2012), winner of the 2012 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award in Poetry, and a half-red sea (2006).


MICHAEL THURSTON is Professor of English and Director of the American Studies Program at Smith College. He teaches courses on twentieth-century poetry in English, modernism, American literature, and American studies and has published numerous essays and reviews and three books: Making Something Happen: American Political Poetry between the World Wars (2001), The Underworld in Twentieth-Century Poetry: From Pound and Eliot to Heaney and Walcott (2009), and Reading Postwar British and Irish Poetry (with Nigel Alderman) (2014).

ALAN WALD is the H. Chandler Davis Professor of English Literature and American Culture at the University of Michigan. He is the author of a trilogy from the University of North Carolina Press on the U.S. literary left in the mid-twentieth century: Exiles from a Future Time (2002), Trinity of Passion (2007), and American Night (2012).
CHRONOLOGY

1909       Ezra Pound, *Personae*
1912       *Poetry* magazine founded
1913       The International Exhibition of Modern Art (The Armory Show)
1914       Ezra Pound, ed., *Des Imagistes*
           Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*
           *The Little Review* founded
           Outbreak of First World War
1915       Amy Lowell, ed. *Some Imagist Poets*
           *Others: A Magazine of the New Verse* founded
           Mina Loy, “Love Songs”
1916       H. D., *Sea Garden*
1917       T. S. Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations*
           Mina Loy, “Songs to Joannes”
           United States enters the First World War
           Revolutions in Russia
           Pulitzer Prize established
1918       Tristan Tzara, *Dada Manifesto*
           End of First World War
1919       T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”
           Treaty of Versailles
           League of Nations founded
           Prohibition Act passed by the U.S. Congress
1920       T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*
           Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*
**Chronology**

William Carlos Williams, *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*
*The Dial* reestablished as a literary magazine
Nineteenth Amendment establishes women’s suffrage in the United States

1921
*New York Dada* magazine founded

1922
T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* published in *The Criterion*, founded that year
Claude McKay, *Harlem Shadows*

1923
Mina Loy, *Lunar Baedecker*
Wallace Stevens, *Harmonium*
Jean Toomer, *Cane*
William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All*

1924
Marianne Moore, *Observations*
André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism*

1925
Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro*
Ezra Pound, *A Draft of XVI Cantos*
Scopes trial

1926
Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues*
*Fire!!* magazine founded

1928
Experimental television broadcasts begin in the United States

1929
Collapse of the New York stock market
The Museum of Modern Art opens in New York City

1930
Hart Crane, *The Bridge*
T. S. Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*
William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*
Ezra Pound, *A Draft of XXX Cantos*

1931
E. E. Cummings, *Viva*
Poetry magazine publishes issue on “Objectivist” verse, edited by Louis Zukofsky

1932
Sterling A. Brown, *Southern Road*
T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*
Louis Zukofsky, ed., *An “Objectivist’s” Anthology*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1933 | Adolf Hitler elected Chancellor of Germany  
Prohibition repealed in the United States |
| 1934 | George Oppen, *Of Being Numerous* |
| 1935 | Marianne Moore, *Selected Poems*  
Wallace Stevens, *Ideas of Order* |
| 1936 | The Spanish Civil War begins |
| 1937 | Wallace Stevens, *The Man with the Blue Guitar* |
| 1938 | Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry*  
Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*  
Muriel Rukeyser, *The Book of the Dead* |
| 1939 | Second World War begins |
| 1940 | *View* magazine founded by Charles Henri Ford in New York City |
| 1941 | John Crowe Ranson, *The New Criticism*  
The United States enters the Second World War after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor  
First commercial television broadcast in the United States |
| 1942 | Wallace Stevens, *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction* |
| 1944 | H. D., *The Walls Do Not Fall*  
T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* |
| 1945 | Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Street in Bronzeville*  
H. D., *Tribute to the Angels*  
Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; end of Second World War  
Formation of United Nations  
The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) becomes a permanent standing committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. |
| 1946 | Elizabeth Bishop, *North & South*  
H. D., *Flowering of the Rod*  
Lorine Niedecker, *New Goose*  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</table>
| 1947 | Robert Lowell, *Lord Weary’s Castle*  
HUAC holds special hearings into alleged communist influence in Hollywood and the entertainment industry, leading to the blacklisting of hundreds of artists by the Hollywood studios |
| 1948 | W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*  
Ezra Pound, *The Pisan Cantos* |
| 1949 | Gwendolyn Brooks, *Annie Allen*  
Charles Olson, “The Kingfishers” |
| 1950 | E. E. Cummings, *XAIPE: 71 Poems*  
Charles Olson, “Projective Verse”  
Wallace Stevens, *The Auroras of Autumn*  
Korean War begins  
In a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator Joseph McCarthy gains national prominence by claiming to have a list of the names of known communists working in the State Department |
| 1951 | Langston Hughes, *Montage of a Dream Deferred*  
Marianne Moore, *Collected Poems*  
*Origin* magazine founded  
Charles Olson appointed rector of Black Mountain College |
| 1952 | Robert Creeley, *Le Fou*  
Archibald MacLeish, *Collected Poems, 1917–1952*  
W. S. Merwin, *A Mask for Janus* |
| 1953 | John Ashbery, *Turandot and Other Poems*  
Kenneth Koch, *Poems*  
Charles Olson, *In Cold Hell, In Thicket*  
Theodore Roethke, *The Waking*  
Melvin Tolson, *Libretto for the Republic of Liberia*  
City Lights Bookstore founded in San Francisco  
Korean War ends |
| 1954 | Anthony Hecht, *A Summoning of Stones*  
*Black Mountain Review* founded |
The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* declares unconstitutional the racial segregation of public schools

1955
W. H. Auden, *The Shield of Achilles*
Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *Pictures of the Gone World*
Adrienne Rich, *The Diamond Cutters*
The Six Gallery reading in San Francisco

1956
John Ashbery, *Some Trees*
John Berryman, *Homage to Miss Bradstreet*
Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*
Denise Levertov, *Here and Now*
Richard Wilbur, *Things of This World*
Black Mountain College closes its doors

1957
Donald Hall, Robert Pack, and Louis Simpson, eds., *New Poets of England and America*
Frank O’Hara, *Meditations in an Emergency*
Wallace Stevens, *Opus Posthumous*

1958
Gregory Corso, *Bomb and Gasoline*
Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *A Coney Island of the Mind*
Yugen magazine founded

1959
Ted Joans, *Funky Jazz Poems*
Robert Lowell, *Life Studies*
W. D. Snodgrass, *Heart’s Needle*
Gary Snyder, *Riptraps and Cold Mountain Poems*
Louis Zukofsky, “A,” 1–12

1960
Robert Duncan, *The Opening of the Field*
Charles Olson, *The Maximus Poems*
Anne Sexton, *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*
Gwendolyn Brooks, *The Bean Eaters*

1961
LeRoi Jones, *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*
The Floating Bear newsletter founded

1962
John Ashbery, *The Tennis Court Oath*
Cid Corman, *Sun Rock Man*
Robert Creeley, *For Love: Poems 1950–1960*
Chronology

Denise Levertov, *The Jacob's Ladder*
William Carlos Williams, *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems*
Second Vatican Council

1963
James Wright, *The Branch Will Not Break*
The March on Washington; Martin Luther King, Jr., delivers his “I Have a Dream Speech” on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial
President John F. Kennedy assassinated in Dallas, Texas

1964
Ted Berrigan, *The Sonnets*
John Berryman, *77 Dream Songs*
Robert Lowell, *For the Union Dead*
Frank O'Hara, *Lunch Poems*
Jack Spicer, *Language*

1965
A. R. Ammons, *Corson's Inlet* and *Tape for the Turn of the New Year*
Charles Olson, *Proprioception*
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*
Melvin Tolson, *Harlem Gallery*
First U.S. combat troops arrive in Vietnam

1966
Amiri Baraka, *Black Art*
James Merrill, *Nights and Days*
Diane di Prima, *Poems for Freddie*
Anne Sexton, *Live or Die*

1967
Robert Bly, *The Light Around the Body*
Robert Creeley, *Words*
Nikki Giovanni, *Black Feeling, Black Talk*
Anthony Hecht, *The Hard Hours*
Lenore Kandel, *Word Alchemy*
W. S. Merwin, *The Lice*
James Wright, *Shall We Gather at the River*

1968
Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, eds., *Black Fire*
Ed Dorn, *Gunslinger*
Robert Duncan, *Bending the Bow*
Audre Lorde, *The First Cities*
Lorine Niedecker, *North Central*
George Oppen, *Of Being Numerous*
Mark Strand, *Reasons for Moving*
Chronology

Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee
Senator Robert F. Kennedy assassinated in Los Angeles, California

1969
John Berryman, The Dream Songs
James Schuyler, Freely Espousing
The Stone Wall Riots take place in New York City, launching the gay liberation movement in the United States
NASA lands the first manned spacecraft on the moon

1970
Amiri Baraka, It's Nation Time
Clark Coolidge, Space
Audre Lorde, Cables to Rage
Sonia Sanchez, We a BaddDDD People
Tottel's newsletter founded

1971
Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era
Galway Kinnell, The Book of Nightmares
W. S. Merwin, The Carrier of Ladders
This journal founded

1972
H. D., Hermetic Definition
Allen Ginsberg, The Fall of America: Poems of These States, 1965–1971

1973
Frank Bidart, Golden State
Robert Lowell, The Dolphin
Muriel Rukeyser, Breaking Open
Last U.S. combat troops withdraw from Vietnam

1974
A. R. Ammons, Sphere: The Form of a Motion
Leslie Marmon Silko, Laguna Woman
Gary Snyder, Turtle Island
President Richard Nixon resigns following the Watergate scandal

1975
John Ashbery, Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror
Denise Levertov, Freeing the Dust
Kenneth Koch, The Art of Love
Anne Waldman, Fast Speaking Woman

1976
James Merrill, Divine Comedies

1977
John Ashbery, Houseboat Days
Jayne Cortez, Mouth on Paper
CHRONOLOGY

Apple Computers launches the Apple II, one of the first generation of mass-market personal computers

1978
Rae Armantrout, *Extremities*
Robert Grenier, *Sentences*
Lyn Hejinian, *Writing Is an Aid to Memory*
Audre Lorde, *The Black Unicorn*
Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*
*L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* magazine founded

1979
Robert Hass, *Praise*
Steve McCaffrey and bpNichol, *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue*

1980
James Schuyler, *The Morning of the Poem*
Louise Glück, *Descending Figure*
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*
Sharon Olds, *Satan Says*

1981
Charles Bernstein, *Disfrutes*
Carolyn Forché, *The Country Between Us*
Sylvia Plath, *The Collected Poems*
Ron Silliman, *Tjanting*

1982
Jayne Cortez, *Firespitter*
Larry Eigner, *Water/Places/a Time*
Bernadette Mayer, *Midwinter Day*
James Merrill, *The Changing Light at Sandover*
Charles Wright, *The Southern Cross*

1983
Charles Bernstein, *Islets/Irritations*
Frank Bidart, *The Sacrifice*
Elizabeth Bishop, *Collected Poems 1927–1979*
Joy Harjo, *She Had Some Horses*
Mary Oliver, *American Primitive*
Gary Snyder, *Axe Handles*

1984
Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein, eds., *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*
John Ashbery, *A Wave*
Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, *The Heat Bird*
Robert Duncan, *Ground Work: Before the War*
Yusef Komunyakaa, *Copacetic*

1985
Amy Clampitt, *What the Light Was Like*
Susan Howe, *My Emily Dickinson*
Chronology

Sonia Sanchez, *Home Girls and Handgrenades*
Gjertrud Schnackenberg, *The Lamplit Answer*

1986
Philip Dacey and David Jauss, eds., *Strong Measures: Contemporary American Poetry in Traditional Forms*
Rita Dove, *Thomas and Beulah*

1987
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Tabula Rosa*
Robert Duncan, *Ground Work II: In the Dark*
Jorie Graham, *The End of Beauty*
Ron Silliman, *The New Sentence*

1988
Ted Berrigan, *A Certain Slant of Sunlight*
Michael Palmer, *Sun*
Leslie Scalapino, *way*

1989
Ed Dorn, *Abhorrences*
Robert Hass, *Human Wishes*
Bernadette Mayer, *Sonnets*
Fall of the Berlin Wall

1990
Frank Bidart, *In the Western Night: Collected Poems*
Joy Harjo, *In Mad Love and War*
Derek Walcott, *Omeros*

1991
John Ashbery, *Flow Chart*
Billy Collins, *Questions About Angels*
Collapse of the USSR
The Persian Gulf War
The World Wide Web becomes publicly accessible

1992
Sherman Alexie, *The Business of Fancydancing*
Charles Bernstein, *A Poetics*
Louise Glück, *The Wild Iris*
Thom Gunn, *The Man with the Night Sweats*
Lyn Hejinian, *The Cell*

1994
Charles Bernstein, *Content’s Dream*

1996
Mark Jarman and David Mason, eds., *Rebel Angels: 25 Poets of the New Formalism*
Susan Howe, *Frame Structures*
**Chronology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Kevin Young, <em>Most Way Home</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>September 11th attacks on the United States; the United States invades Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Lyn Hejinian, <em>The Language of Inquiry</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The Iraq War begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Natasha Trethewey, <em>Native Guard</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>