



The Art of the Short Story

By Dana Gioia, R. S. Gwynn

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This affordably-priced collection presents masterpieces of short fiction from 52 of the greatest story writers of all time. From Sherwood Anderson to Virginia Woolf, this anthology encompasses a rich global and historical mix of the very best works of short fiction and presents them in a way students will find accessible, engaging, and relevant. The book's unique integration of biographical and critical background gives students a more intimate understanding of the works and their authors.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A robust volume of 63 stories from 52 authors from 20 different countries, Gwynn and Gioia's anthology seems destined for undergraduate classrooms. Most of the editors' selections come from the usual literary heavyweights, authors like Hemingway, Chekhov, Joyce, Borges, Faulkner, Welty and Melville. But they do include a handful of more contemporary writers, such as Chinua Achebe, Ha Jin, Sandra Cisneros and Alice Munro as well. Each author receives a page-long biography, which dispenses some interesting facts (e.g., Tolstoy's infidelities, Woolf's depression, Gogol's madness, Poe's poverty, Mishima's suicide), gives a careful analysis of the author's works and sets them in the context of various literary traditions. Garcia Marquez's use of magical realism, for example, is connected to the surreal writings of Kafka, Maupassant, Cheever, Singer and Rushdie. Teachers and would-be writers will especially appreciate the "Author's Perspective" that accompanies each short story. This commentary, written by the author of the story itself, is used by the editors to illuminate the fictional text: its aims, its context or its workings. Sherwood Anderson and Raymond Carver's essays, for example, offer advice on the craft of writing. Margaret Atwood discusses Canadian identity; Alice Walker writes on race and gender; Camus discusses revolution and repression. Fitzgerald's self-interview and Cheever's "Why I Write Short Stories" both contain a comic edge, while Flannery O'Connor's essay explains the importance of religious grace in her stories. The anthology also includes instructional sections on the basic elements of short fiction, writing about fiction, critical approaches from various theoretical schools and a glossary of literary terms. With all its supporting material, the collection may seem geared for the student, yet its flexibility also allows for browsing by the casual short story reader.

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From [Booklist](#)

Short story anthologies abound, but this one has its distinctions. The selections go beyond standard writers; appearing here are Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro, two firmly established but not often anthologized Canadian writers. Sandra Cisneros sits well alongside Ha Jin, two vital contemporary writers who may not be familiar names to readers. The inclusion of Gustav Flaubert and James Baldwin highlights the unfortunate but not rare situation of short works often being overlooked by appreciators of the authors' more famous novels. Included for each story is a short commentary called "Author's Perspective." And explanations of the elements of fiction (including plot and style) are partnered with a selection of critical articles about the short fiction form. All in all, a stimulating education course for library patrons feeling inadequate in their working knowledge of the wonderful world of short stories. *Brad Hooper*

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About the Author

Dana Gioia, a poet, critic, and teacher, has published three collections of poetry-Daily Horoscope (1986), The Gods of Winter (1991), and Interrogations at Noon (2001)-an influential study of poetry's place in contemporary America, Can Poetry Matter? (1992), and has edited several anthologies. He currently serves as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

R. S. Gwynn is the author of five collections of poetry and has edited two volumes of the Dictionary of Literary Biography. He has also authored The Advocates of Poetry: A Reader of American Poet-Critics of the Modernist Era, New Expansive Poetry: Theory, Criticism, and History, and Fiction and Poetry for the Longman Pocket Anthology Series.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Oliver Crites:

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