

The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction,
First Edition

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If someone had told me in graduate school that I'd become a coeditor of one of the most popular anthologies of contemporary short fiction in the U.S., used widely in composition and literature courses, graduate and undergraduate creative writing workshops, I would have been surprised.

I'm still surprised, even now as I spend the summer putting together this tenure file while I work on a web survey of two new anthologies—the second edition of *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction* and *The Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*.

I came to become an editor of anthologies when I realized that most of the anthologies I'd taught in my literature classes and writing workshops simply didn't reflect the richness and diversity of voices in contemporary short fiction. Most of the anthologies out there reflected the opinions of a single well-known editor/writer, who often anthologized his own work and that of his friends (yes, and most of them were men).¹ Surely, I thought, there must be a better, more democratic way to put together an anthology that reflected the incredible renaissance of the short story over the last thirty years while still representing the U. S.'s great diversity of voices and stories. So I decided to go to the source: I surveyed teaching writers all over the U. S. and Canada to find out which contemporary stories they most often brought to class to share with their students.

I wrote [my original proposal](#) for *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction* in 1997, and the book was published to wide acclaim in trade paperback two years later in 1999, receiving excellent reader reviews and rankings on such sites as [amazon.com](#), whose current nine online reviews all rank the anthology with four-stars. In the spring of 2000, just as I was being offered a position at UTEP, Quality Paperback Book Club ran the anthology as a [QPB Featured Selection](#) and continues to offer the book occasionally in its book club flyers. Then, in 2004, Borders Books reprinted a special hard-cover edition entitled [Contemporary Fiction: 50 Short Stories Since 1970](#). Clearly, the book's success has far exceeded my expectations.

More important, though, at least for a teaching writer like me, the anthology has become widely used as a textbook at universities, local writing groups and even high schools, and many writers have come up to me at writers' conferences and artist residencies telling me they were using the book and loved it, and their students do, too.

Here is just a sampling those teachers who've adopted the anthology for use in their classes and workshops:

1. [Tony Ardizzone, Indiana University](#)
2. [Dr. Mary Baumhover, Western New Mexico University](#)
3. [Rachel Basch, Wesleyan University](#)
4. [Molly Bendell, Loyola Marymount University](#)
5. [Curtis and Desnoyers, University of Kansas](#)
6. [Cynthia Kuhn, University of Denver](#)
7. [C. Mares, Sweet Briar College](#)
8. [Ryan Moeller, University of Arizona](#)
9. [Michelle Richmond, Bowling Green State University](#)
10. [Dr. Shapiro, University of Nebraska](#)

¹ Even though my own stories have been widely anthologized, I've vowed never to anthologize a story of my own.

11. [Cynthia Shor, Adult Program](#)
12. [Donley Watt, Texas State University](#)

It was never my intention to become an anthologist. I'm a writer and a teacher first. As much time and work as it has taken over many years, I still think it's worth the effort. Stories are getting out into the world that may never have been read, and that's enough for me.