

The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction, Second Edition

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The second edition of the *Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction, Second Edition* came about from a telephone conversation spring of 2006 I had with my editor, Cherise Davis, at Simon & Schuster/Touchstone.

The original anthology, we both agreed, had been a spectacular success, but over the years many teaching writers I'd spoken to had voiced to me mild dissatisfaction with certain under-represented or over-anthologized stories. For this reason and others, Cherise Grant suggested that we take the anthology into a second edition. It was time, she said.

The New Proposal and Contracts

My [new proposal for the second edition](#) added something new: [an online survey](#)¹ which, with some major changes, became the template for our actual survey, conducted from July 1-31, 2006.²

When Cherise Davis approved the proposal and sent us [the original contract](#), I went into negotiations and signed a [revised contract](#), then got to work, asking former MFA student Amit Ghosh, who runs *BorderSenses* magazine and [BorderSenses Technology](#) to take on the job of creating a complex online survey unlike anything done before.³ I worked on the look of the site, and my webdevelopers put it together while I spent over a month putting together an extensive three-thousand-entry [database of emails](#) from freelance and academic writers across the U. S. and Canada, which I used to send out survey requests at the end of June.

The Survey Results

The [survey results](#) for the *Scribner Anthology* exceeded my expectations—73 responded to Part I of the survey (suggesting which stories to include from the original), 143 to Part II (suggesting new stories to consider), a much greater number of responses than for the first edition—and the [writers who responded](#) were some of the most respected short story writers in the country: Sherman Alexie, Mary Gaitskill, Enid Shomer, Tony Earley, Bob Shacochis, Janet Burroway, David Leavitt, Joan Silber, Alan Weir, Susan Perabo, Rudolfo Anaya, Ehud Havazelet, Abby Frucht, Dorothy Allison, Kevin Canty, Sondra Spatt Olsen, David Huddle and many others.

For a more detailed overview of our results, please click the links to our Excel database files below:

1. [Scribner Stories and Nominators Parts I and II](#)
2. [Final Scribner Rankings](#) (with my preliminary suggestions to my editor and coeditor for changes to the second edition as of August 8, 2006)

¹ This is a mockup from our original proposal. The actual survey ended up being quite different, and I owe much of that streamlining to my immensely talented web survey developers, Amit Ghosh and Javier Sánchez.

² The actual survey is now closed and inaccessible online, but you may click [here](#) to go to the main survey page.

³ Just completed two weeks ago as I write this document.

As of this writing, I'm just beginning to sort through the nominations for stories, and my coeditor and I will read all the new nominations over the next four months, taking into account all those stories writers have suggested we replace. Through the fall of 2006 we will make our decisions, and I will then have to get permissions for each of the stories and prepare the documents for the publisher by the beginning of November, 2006. I made my deadline for the first edition and I'll meet the deadline for the second.

It's a tremendous amount of detail work, but I'm convinced that this already-popular anthology will be much improved in its second edition.