

BLACKWELL ANNOTATED ANTHOLOGIES



Eighteenth-Century Poetry

An Annotated Anthology

THIRD EDITION

Edited by David Fairer and Christine Gerrard

WILEY Blackwell

Eighteenth-Century Poetry

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		1700	Pomfret, <i>The Choice</i>
		1701	Philips, <i>The Splendid Shilling</i> Finch, <i>The Spleen</i>
1702	William III succeeded by Queen Anne		
1702–13	War of Spanish Succession		
1703	Great Storm	1703	Egerton, <i>Poems</i>
1704	Battle of Blenheim		
		1706	Watts, <i>Horae Lyricae</i>
1707	Act of Union		
		1709–10	<i>The Tatler</i> prints Swift and A. Philips
1711–14	<i>The Spectator</i>		
1713	Peace of Utrecht	1713	Finch, <i>Miscellany Poems</i> Pope, <i>Windsor-Forest</i>
1714	Queen Anne succeeded by George I Fall of Tory ministry	1714	Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (five cantos) Gay, <i>The Shepherd's Week</i>
1715	First Jacobite Rising		
		1716	Gay, <i>Trivia</i> Montagu, <i>Court Poems</i>
		1717	Pope, <i>Works</i> includes <i>Eloisa to Abelard</i>
		1718	Prior, <i>Poems</i>
1719	Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>		
1720	"South Sea Bubble"		
1721	Walpole becomes Prime Minister	1721	Montagu, <i>Epistle from Arthur Gray</i>
1722	Death of Marlborough	1722	Parnell, <i>Poems</i> , ed. Pope
1726	Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	1726	Savage, <i>Miscellaneous Poems</i> (incl. Fowke, Dyer)
1727	George I succeeded by George II Death of Newton	1727	Swift's last <i>Stella's Birthday</i> poem
		1728	Pope, <i>The Dunciad</i> Thomson, <i>Spring</i> Savage, <i>The Bastard</i>
1730–57	Colley Cibber Poet Laureate	1730	Duck, <i>The Thresher's Labour</i> Thomson, <i>The Seasons</i>
1731	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i> founded	1731	Pope, <i>Epistle to Burlington</i>
1732	Hogarth, <i>A Harlot's Progress</i>	1732	Swift, <i>The Lady's Dressing Room</i>
1733	Excise Bill crisis	1733	Montagu, <i>Verses to the Imitator of Horace</i>
		1734	Swift, <i>A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed</i>
		1735	Pope, <i>Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot</i> and <i>Epistle to a Lady</i>
		1736	Duck, <i>Poems on Several Occasions</i>
1737	Theatre Licensing Act		
1739	War declared on Spain	1738	Johnson, <i>London</i>
1739–40	Hume, <i>Treatise of Human Nature</i>	1739	Collier, <i>The Woman's Labour</i> Swift, <i>Verses on the Death of Dr Swift</i>
1740–8	War of Austrian Succession	1740	Sarah Dixon, <i>Poems</i>
1741	Handel, <i>Messiah</i>		
1742	Walpole resigns	1742	Gray writes <i>Ode on the Spring</i>
		1743	Pope, <i>The Dunciad</i> (four books)
1744	First Methodist conference	1744	Akenside, <i>The Pleasures of Imagination</i> Joseph Warton, <i>The Enthusiast</i>
1745	Second Jacobite Rising		

<i>Historical and Cultural Events</i>		<i>Poetic Landmarks</i>	
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1747–8	Richardson, <i>Clarissa</i>	1747	Thomas Warton, <i>The Pleasures of Melancholy</i> Montagu, <i>Six Town Eclogues</i> (includes <i>The Lover</i>)
1748	Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle	1748	Leapor, <i>Poems</i> Dodsley's <i>Collection of Poems</i>
1749	Fielding, <i>Tom Jones</i>	1749	Johnson, <i>The Vanity of Human Wishes</i>
		1750	Mary Jones, <i>Miscellanies</i>
		1751	Gray, <i>Elegy</i> Leapor, <i>Poems</i> (2nd vol.)
1752	Gregorian Calendar adopted in Britain	1753	Aaron Hill, <i>Works</i> (4 vols)
1754–6	<i>The Connoisseur</i>		
1755	Johnson's <i>Dictionary</i>		
1756–63	Seven Years War	1756	Lloyd, <i>The Cit's Country Box</i>
1757	Battle of Plassey	1757	Dyer, <i>The Fleece</i> Gray, <i>Odes</i>
1759	British Museum opens	1759–63	Smart in Potter's madhouse
1760	George II succeeded by George III	1760	Macpherson, <i>Fragments of Ancient Poetry</i> Lloyd, <i>Shakespeare. An Epistle</i>
1760–7	Sterne, <i>Tristram Shandy</i>	1761	Churchill, <i>Night</i>
		1762	Lloyd, <i>Poems</i>
1763	Peace of Paris. John Wilkes arrested	1763	Smart, <i>A Song to David</i>
1765	American Stamp Act	1765	Macpherson, <i>Works of Ossian</i>
1766–8	Second Pitt ministry		
1768	Royal Academy founded		
1769	Captain Cook at Tahiti Shakespeare Jubilee	1769	Barbauld writes <i>Corsica</i>
1770–82	Lord North's ministry	1770	Goldsmith, <i>The Deserted Village</i> Chatterton, <i>An Excelente Balade of Charitie</i>
1771	Arkwright's first spinning mill		
1772–5	Cook's second voyage		
1773	"Boston Tea Party"	1773	Barbauld, <i>Poems</i>
1774	Priestley discovers oxygen		
1776	American Declaration of Independence		
1777	Sheridan, <i>School for Scandal</i>	1777	Chatterton, 'Rowley' <i>Poems</i> Thomas Warton, <i>Poems</i>
1779	First iron bridge		
1780	Gordon Riots		
1781	Uranus discovered		
		1782	Thomas Warton, <i>Reynolds's Window</i>
1783	Peace of Versailles	1783	Crabbe, <i>The Village</i>
1784	First balloon ascent in Britain		
		1785	Cowper, <i>The Task</i> Yearsley, <i>Poems</i>
		1786	Burns, <i>Poems</i> (Kilmarnock edn)
1787	US Constitution signed	1787	Yearsley, <i>Poems, on Various Subjects</i>
1788	Anti-Slavery petition		
1789	Fall of the Bastille		
1791	Radcliffe, <i>The Romance of the Forest</i>	1791	Burns, <i>Tam o' Shanter</i>
1792	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>Vindication</i>	1792	Cowper, <i>Yardley Oak</i>
1793	Execution of Louis XVI		

<i>Historical and Cultural Events</i>		<i>Poetic Landmarks</i>	
1794	Godwin, <i>Caleb Williams</i>	1794	Blake, <i>Songs of Experience</i>
1796–7	Napoleon's Italian campaign		
1798	Battle of the Nile	1798	<i>Lyrical Ballads</i>
		1799	Barbauld, <i>To Mr Coleridge</i>
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Introduction

The richness and variety of eighteenth-century poetry has become increasingly recognized in recent years. Thanks in large measure to Roger Lonsdale's pioneering volumes and to the many new discoveries in the field of women writers, the range of its voices has dramatically increased. We believe that the need has arisen for a verse anthology tailored to the requirements of students and teachers of eighteenth-century literature: one which consists of complete poems or books from poems, rather than extracts, and which supplies detailed introductory headnotes and full annotation.

This volume presents a collection of poems by poets chosen from the full range of the period 1700–1800. We have deliberately chosen not to include the early work of Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge (notably *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, and Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, 1789/1794), since this is well represented in Romantic anthologies and would have demanded considerable space. The 172 items collected here range chronologically from *The Choice* (1700) to *London's Summer Morning* (1800). In the opening text the Reverend John Pomfret describes his ideal existence: a genteel life lived in a modest country estate with library, cellar, and a select group of friends, and in one of the last William Cowper expresses the desolation of the introspective mind severed from social connection, drowning in an ocean of despair. We seem to move from domestic comforts to elemental isolation. Yet despite these apparent polarities, there is no simple trajectory in the intervening years from rational sociability to Romantic solipsism, from 'The Age of Satire' to 'The Age of Sensibility'. The present volume may reveal some of the broad movements of eighteenth-century poetry: during the 1740s and 1750s the social and political satire of Swift, Gay and Pope is shouldered aside by a young generation of early Romantics (Collins, the Wartons, Gray, Akenside); and in the 1760s, with the work of Macpherson, Chatterton and Smart, English poetry recovers an older music of bard, minstrel and psalmist. But even during the first two decades of the century poets are developing recognisably proto-Romantic ideas. Isaac Watts and Aaron Hill seek to liberate poetry's visionary potential, prioritising Pindaric rapture over Popean 'correctness', the sublime over the sociable; and Ann Finch, in more subtle fashion, explores the power of the imagination. Similarly, political satire does not fade away with the fall of Walpole (1742) and the death of Pope (1744). During the 1760s it resurfaces in a new form in the work of Charles Churchill, whose radical politics sets him at odds with his predecessor Pope, a model he both emulates and contests. Eighteenth-century poetry does not represent a single progressive development, but an ebb and flow of tastes, and a continuing debate over the nature and potential of poetry itself.

The rich diversity of verse forms employed by the poets of the eighteenth century is evident throughout this collection. The ambitious metrical experimentation of Collins, Smart, Macpherson and Burns runs counter to any idea that the century was dominated by the heroic couplet. Poets exploit a wide range of metrical resources, from the shaped paragraphs of Miltonic blank verse to percussive rhymed octosyllabics, the rhythms of primitive epic to the easy converse of the verse-letter, the lofty complexity of the Pindaric ode to the simplest song.

We do not pretend that our selection represents the 'best' 172 poems of the period (it is not that kind of anthology). But we do hope to have brought together the work of writers with particularly interesting voices, who engage with material that tests and rewards their poetic skill. As a matter of principle we have declined to offer extracts from poems, on the grounds that to remove an individual passage from its context is to sacrifice one of the most characteristic qualities of eighteenth-century verse: its fascination with transition and digression, and the relation of part to whole. Satirical portraits or set-piece descriptions are usually part of an argument, and the poet's craft is to work the varied elements into a whole, exploiting

juxtapositions and shifts in tone to do so (Pope, Thomson and Cowper are especially skilled in this). Extracts can give a false impression of what a poet is trying to do, and eighteenth-century verse tends to become miniaturized and rather less ambitious as a result.

Some of the most interesting poetry of the period is to be found in its longer works. These are not always adequately represented in the anthology format, where several briefer poems or vivid extracts are likely to be preferred to a single more substantial piece. But the eighteenth century was a great age of poetic argument and exploration, in which poems develop ironies and insights over a wider range. Like good conversation or intense meditation, they shift direction and explore issues on a more extensive scale. Hence our principle of giving whole pieces only (either complete poems or a complete book of a larger work). This means, for example, that we include individual books from *Trivia*, *The Dunciad*, *The Seasons*, *The Fleece*, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, *The Village* and *The Task*. The century is also particularly strong in those middle-length poems of between one and four hundred lines which tend to be excluded from anthologies in favour of several of their briefer competitors. We have therefore consciously made a feature of including some of these more substantial pieces, one result being that women poets are seen tackling more extensive and argumentative subjects. Items of this kind include Anne Finch's *Upon the Hurricane*, Mary Collier's *The Woman's Labour*, Mary Jones's *Of Desire*, Mary Leapor's *Epistle to Artemisia* and *Crumble-Hall*, Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Corsica* and Ann Yearsley's *Clifton Hill*.

In our choice of texts we have tried to be both useful and adventurous, combining the familiar and unfamiliar. However, rather than pack in as many 'samples' from different authors as possible, we have mostly attempted to offer two or three poems by a single interesting author so as to give some idea of his or her range. We set the work of well-known figures (Pope, Swift, Thomson, Gray, Burns and Cowper) alongside exciting work by other writers, particularly women, with strong and distinctive voices. Several of these (Finch, Montagu, Leapor and Barbauld) are now recognized as major poets of the period and receive a corresponding amount of space in this volume. We have deliberately sought to bring the century's women poets into dialogue with the more established male writers. Rather than present them as a special group with characteristically 'feminine' concerns, we intentionally juxtapose them (Pope followed by Lady Mary, Richard Savage by Martha Fowke, Stephen Duck by Mary Collier, Ann Yearsley by Robert Burns, Anna Barbauld by William Cowper). This can be particularly helpful when a female poet supplies an indignant riposte to a poem by her male counterpart (Fowke's *The Innocent Inconstant* in reply to Savage's *Unconstant*, or Collier's *The Woman's Labour* answering Duck's *The Thresher's Labour*). Such alignments also illuminate the way in which women poets engage with, yet never slavishly emulate, male poetic models. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu offers a voice of commitment, indignation and sensitivity quite different from her detested Pope's: her landscape-poem *Epistle to Lord Bathurst* is a sharp reply to his *Epistle to Burlington*, and her own poem of frustrated love, *Epistle from Arthur Gray the Footman*, dramatically reworks the themes of *Eloisa to Abelard*. Although both Mary Jones and Mary Leapor engage admiringly with Popean forms, they draw them into new directions, giving the speaking voice a lighter, humorous sparkle.

Although we have tried to avoid any obvious thematized approach, we acknowledge that in the selected texts there is a discernible emphasis on certain issues, such as male-female relations, autobiography, the self and the natural world, social change, the politics and economics of landscape and pastoral, the passions, imagination, madness, beauty, nature and art, the recovery of the past, birth and death; and on certain modes such as loco-descriptive and meditative poetry, burlesque and mock-heroic, georgic, epistle, narrative, ode and elegy. Poets in the volume address similar topics or themes from radically different perspectives, and we have suggested a few such groupings in 'Selected Contents by Theme'. We hope that readers will go on to establish their own connections and find relationships unperceived by the editors.

Preface to Third Edition

For this expanded edition of the anthology we are able to add a further selection of forty-two poems. Blackwell's generosity has made revision an enjoyable challenge, and in making the new choices we have continued our policy of combining the familiar and unfamiliar, interweaving substantial and smaller pieces, and setting work by established writers alongside vivid and eloquent poems by less well-known figures. Teaching eighteenth-century poetry is a delight because it repeatedly brings fresh discoveries. The verse of the period is remarkable for its variety and range, for its lively engagement with the world about us, its questioning of ideas, and its intelligent take on human experience. We hope these riches will continue to be evident in the additional material, and that students and course instructors will find more resources for adventurous teaching.

A key principle remains the encouragement of dialogue and argument, and we have continued to select poems that can be brought into conversation with others. This is sometimes explicit: in their contrasting ways, both Anne Ingram (newly represented here) and Anne Finch take the measure of Alexander Pope's writing about women, and offer their confident replies; and in *The Dean's Provocation* Lady Mary Wortley Montagu excoriates the Jonathan Swift of *The Lady's Dressing Room* in terms that can still disturb us today. In this new edition Montagu's *Verses Address'd to the Imitator of Horace* and Mary Leapor's *The Enquiry* are now joined by the two poems that directly stimulated them: Pope's *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* and the first epistle of *An Essay on Man*. It is good to be able to include these strong pieces that represent Pope the imitator of Horace and the philosophical poet. Another substantial addition is by James Thomson, who is now represented not only by *Spring* (from *The Seasons*) but by the remarkable first version of *Winter* (1726) in which the young poet enthuses over the landscape of his native Scotland. We have added William Collins's *Ode on the Death of Mr Thomson*, which voices the mid-century apprehension of Thomson as a 'druidic' nature poet. Two further highly contrasted poems by Collins are included: his dramatic and emotive *Ode to Fear* and his pastoral lyric, *Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline*.

Women poets continue to feature strongly, and we have taken the opportunity to expand our selections from the work of Finch, Montagu, Martha Fowke, Mary Jones, Leapor, Ann Yearsley, and Anna Laetitia Barbauld. By special request we are bringing back Anna Seward and Mary Robinson from the first edition, and are also introducing a selection of lively poems by Mary Barber and Mehetabel Wright that should stimulate class discussion. In Barber's *Written for my Son* and Wright's *To an Infant* the voice of the loving mother comes across in utterly different ways. With Barber's *Conclusion of a Letter* and Wright's *Address to Her Husband and Wedlock: A Satire* we are conscious of a 'marriage' theme emerging (strengthened by the return also of Swift's *Strephon and Chloe*). This topic is reinforced by another of Montagu's updated Ovidian epistles, her *Epistle from Mrs Y[onge] to her Husband*; and by Martha Fowke's *A Letter to my Love*.—*All alone, past 12, in the Dumps*, an extraordinary poem about passionate infatuation. The harsher Swiftian side of Leapor is represented by *Soto*, her vivid cameo of a drunken youth; and Yearsley's heartfelt ode *To Indifference* mounts an attack on Sensibility and asks to be brought into conversation with other poems in the volume.

Over the last few years it has become clear that ecological approaches to eighteenth-century literature are featuring more and more, and 'green' issues, a new 'organic', and the relationship between human and animal are offering rewarding approaches. In this third edition we are happy to cater for this by introducing a group of poems where these topics are interestingly handled, and where the reader is encouraged to debate the principles raised: Finch's *The Tree*; John Gay's *The Man and the Flea*; Mary Jones's *Elegy, On a favourite Dog, suppos'd to be poison'd*;

Barbauld's *The Mouse's Petition*; William Cowper's *The Poplar-Field* and *Epitaph on a Hare*; and Seward's *Colebrooke Dale*.

We also build on the previous selection of poetry engaging with the challenges and tribulations of authorship, by adding Fowke's *On being charged with Writing incorrectly*, Finch's *To a Friend, in Praise of the Invention of Writing Letters*, Barber's *To a Lady, who commanded me to send her an Account in Verse*, and Leapor's popular *Upon her Play being returned to her, stained with Claret*. We are conscious that *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* offers a kaleidoscope of poetic modes, both direct and ironic, stretching from the poetry of deep feeling to the most playful satire, from graceful charm to bitter indignation, from social injustice to domestic routines, philosophy to travesty. This range has been consciously sustained. We are glad to have found room for Robinson's three late satires in which she consciously places herself in the tradition of Swift, Prior, and Pope; for Cowper's powerful street-ballad *The Negro's Complaint*, whose inclusion is long overdue; for Barbauld's richly anecdotal *Washing-Day*; for Finch's little poem *Glass*, a miniature of philosophical observation; for the intimate ambiguities of Swift's earliest *Stella* poem; and for Thomas Warton's *Prologue on the Old Winchester Playhouse* to represent the century's delight in ridiculous burlesque. Just one item from the second edition has been omitted: Burns's *The Vision* has been replaced by *The Rigs o' Barley* and *A Man's a Man for a' That*, two of the most lively and popular of his pieces, which highlight the Scottish bard's seductiveness and social indignation.

We have also taken the opportunity to expand the thematic index, which we hope will continue to stimulate readers in working between texts and following up ideas and topics.

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