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To  
J. SAUNDERS REDDING,  
*scholar, teacher, critic,*  
*and*  
*highly esteemed fellow-editor*

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## PREFACE

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The original *Cavalcade* was published in 1971 and was for a generation of students a popular text. Much has happened, however, in the field of African American literature since 1971. There has been a dramatic upsurge in publications by new authors; there has been a reaction to the black revolution, which climaxed during the late sixties and early seventies; there have been new and important national honors for African American writers; and perhaps most important of all, there has come into prominence a cadre of black female authors—authors who, in some cases, have brought to African American literature a new critical outlook. And there are other factors that make a new edition of *Cavalcade* necessary: the death of certain authors, a new type of critical approach, new works written by authors originally in the text, new sources of bibliography, and several other changes brought about by time. Because of the great number of changes that have occurred and because of the recent proliferation of African-American-related books, the editors felt it necessary to make the edition a two-volume text, which we are certain will make it more convenient for a year course in African American studies.

The purpose of this anthology is to provide a representative selection of as much as possible of the best prose and poetry written by African Americans since 1776. While it has been our primary aim to make these choices on the basis of literary merit, we have also tried to cover as many areas of black life in America as was consistent with our first objective. We believe that this collection gives a fairly comprehensive picture of the black experience in America for the past two hundred years.

In making our selections we have tried within reason to avoid duplicating the material in other anthologies. However, to avoid all of the selections in other works would be unwise; to do so would leave out of our book some of the best work done by black writers in America. Since there is a “classic” African American literature just as there is a classic canon of English or French or any other established literature, we inevitably

have some duplications. But we also have included many works not found in other collections.

Whenever feasible, we have given whole works rather than excerpts. A few entries, however, have been far too long to include in their entirety in an anthology of this size, and we have used parts of the works—parts which we believe can stand alone. We have done the same for plays, and naturally we have used chapters from novels and autobiographies. In every case we have seen to it that the selection can stand alone and is fairly representative of the author's general matter and manner. Whenever we left out short sections of a work, we have indicated this omission with the conventional ellipses; for longer omissions, we have used ornaments. When novels or autobiographies have chapter titles, we have used them, noting the work from which the excerpt was taken. When there are no titles, we simply note the work from which the selection was taken.

This anthology is designed for use as a text in African American literature courses or as a supplementary text in American literature courses. The introductions to the six sections in volumes I and II provide, we believe, a background sufficient to give meaning and perspective to the offerings in each section. The bibliographical data at the end of the headnotes and in the "Selected Bibliography" should be helpful to student and teacher alike, serving, we hope, as springboards for additional study.

In preparing this volume, we have examined and consulted practically all of the anthologies, collections, and critical works on African American literature extant, and in some ways we are indebted to all of them. We wish, however, to acknowledge a special indebtedness to the following works: *The Negro in Literature and Art* (third edition) and *Early Negro American Writers* by Benjamin Brawley; *To Make a Poet Black* by J. Saunders Redding; *The Negro Author* by Vernon Loggins; *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, edited by Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston; *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 33, Afro-American Fiction Writers After 1955*; *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 41, Afro-American Poets Since 1955*; *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 50, Afro-American Writers Before the Harlem Renaissance*; *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 51, Afro-American Writers from the Harlem Renaissance to 1940*, all of which were edited by Trudier Harris and Thadious M. Davis.

An anthology of this size needs so much bibliographical, critical, and other kinds of help, from colleagues, fellow scholars, and friends, it is practically impossible to thank all of them here. We must, therefore, settle for a chosen few, especially those who have helped to bring out *The New Cavalcade*; among them Fay Acker, senior editor of the Howard University Press, who, through her guidance, made our job easier; Cynthia Lewis and Iris Eaton, also of Howard University Press, who handled the numerous permissions requests for both volumes of *The New Cavalcade*; Janell Walden

Agyeman, who researched information for the headnotes; Kamili Anderson, who prepared the bibliographies; Rhonda Williams and Lisa McCullough, who worked on headnotes; Professor Eugene Hammond and Janet Duncan of the University of Maryland; Kathy Johnson and Laurie Wilshusen of the University of Nebraska; and O. Rudolph Aggrey, director of the Howard University Press, who encouraged and supported, in every way possible, this project. We cannot thank individually all of the members of the famous Moorland-Spingarn Research Center who helped us almost daily for a long period. It is a great library with a highly efficient and helpful staff. We are also deeply indebted to Ethelbert E. Miller, supervisor of Howard University's African American Resource Center, for his help in securing source material for our book.

The reader will note that *The New Cavalcade* now has three editors rather than the original two, Arthur P. Davis (a professor of English who came from Virginia Union University to Howard University in 1944) and J. Saunders Redding (Ernest I. White Professor of American Studies and Humane Letters at Cornell University). Professor Redding died in 1988. Prior to his death, however, Professors Davis and Redding had decided to add a third editor, some scholar who had a deep knowledge about contemporary criticism and the recent great upsurge in publications by African American women. The new editor is Dr. Joyce A. Joyce, professor of English at the University of Nebraska. Professor Joyce's work complements the critical outlook of the two original editors, and she brings a contemporary balance to *The New Cavalcade*. Professor Redding's sensibility remains in the headnotes, introductions, and selections he chose. We are proud to have worked with him on this volume.

ARTHUR P. DAVIS

JOYCE ANN JOYCE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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In this enlarged and updated revision of *Cavalcade* (originally published in 1971), now *The New Cavalcade*, we have worked with a twofold purpose in mind: to show the evolution of African American writing as literary art and to provide the historical context that gives meaning to this writing as the expression of the black American's special experience in the nation. Our work covers the more than two hundred years of this literature's existence and is designed primarily for the student of African-American literature.

It has been our purpose to give not only a comprehensive account of the development of the literature, but, as far as humanly possible, a balanced and impartial account as well. No author has been left out because we disagree with his critical attitudes, his politics, or his stand on certain issues. By the same token, no author has been included because he happens to think as we do. Our selections, for example, represent practically every major African American critic from Alain Locke to Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and their varying and often strongly conflicting critical stands. Our criticism is found in the headnotes and chapter introductions.

The term "African American writing" as used in the title requires an explanation that goes beyond the obvious one of a body of writing by black Americans. Some Negro writers like William Stanley Braithwaite, Anne Spencer, and Frank Yerby "write like whites." The entire stock of their referents is white, Anglo-Saxon American derived. Most black American writers, however, create out of a dual consciousness: African and American. The writers are twin-rooted, and while one root is nourished by the myths, customs, culture, and values traditional in the Western world, the other feeds hungrily on the experiential reality of blackness. These writers have a special vision. They are persuaded by a special mission. In their work they combine the sermon and the liturgy, the reality and the dream, the *is* and the *ought to be*. Their writing is intended to appeal as much to the cognitive as to the affective side of man's being.

The question of what to call ourselves has become an issue for *The New Cavalcade*. Frankly, it has been an issue since Emancipation. The



popular name at first was, seemingly, colored (as in NAACP), then came negro (with a lower case "n"), then Negro (with an upper case "N"), then Afro-American, then Black (with a capital "B"), then black (with a small "b"), and now African American.

When *Cavalcade* was originally published, *Negro* was still widely accepted, although after the social and literary changes of the sixties *black* gradually became the popular designation. For some older scholars and laypersons, *black* was an ugly term, and they hung on to *Negro* or used *Afro-American*. The editors of *The New Cavalcade* tended to use the term *African-American*; however, we felt free to use *Negro*, *black*, and *Afro-American*. In short, we have no desire to enter into any controversy over what to call ourselves. It is a decision that the people will make, as they have always done. We are simply trying, as stated previously, to give a comprehensive view of colored, Negro, black, Afro-American, and African American literature.

Though *The New Cavalcade* is comprehensive, the basis on which works were chosen for inclusion is primarily literary merit. This excluded the work of some writers who have a certain historical importance and who, therefore, are subjects of comment in the introductions. When other than an author's best is included, we do so because it represents a critical phase of his or her development.

For the purposes of a historical survey, it seemed sensible to divide the chronology of African American writing into six periods in two volumes. The periods in Volume I are designated and dated: "Pioneer Writers (1760–1830)"; "Freedom Fighters (1830–1865)"; "Accommodation and Protest (1865–1910)"; and "The New Negro Renaissance and Beyond (1910–1954)." The periods covered in Volume II are "Integration versus Black Nationalism (1954–1970)" and "New Directions (1970 to the Present)." Each period is prefaced by a critical introduction; there is a brief biobibliographical headnote for each author and a Selected Bibliography at the end of each volume.

The editors have exercised discretion in matters of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in those works which were carelessly printed and edited in the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth. After that time, the editors have generally followed the texts as published.

Though the editors designed *The New Cavalcade* primarily as a book for students and scholars, they hope it is something more. They hope that it is a book that the general public may read with pleasure and profit.

A. P. D.

J. S. R.

J. A. J.

## THE NEW CAVALCADE