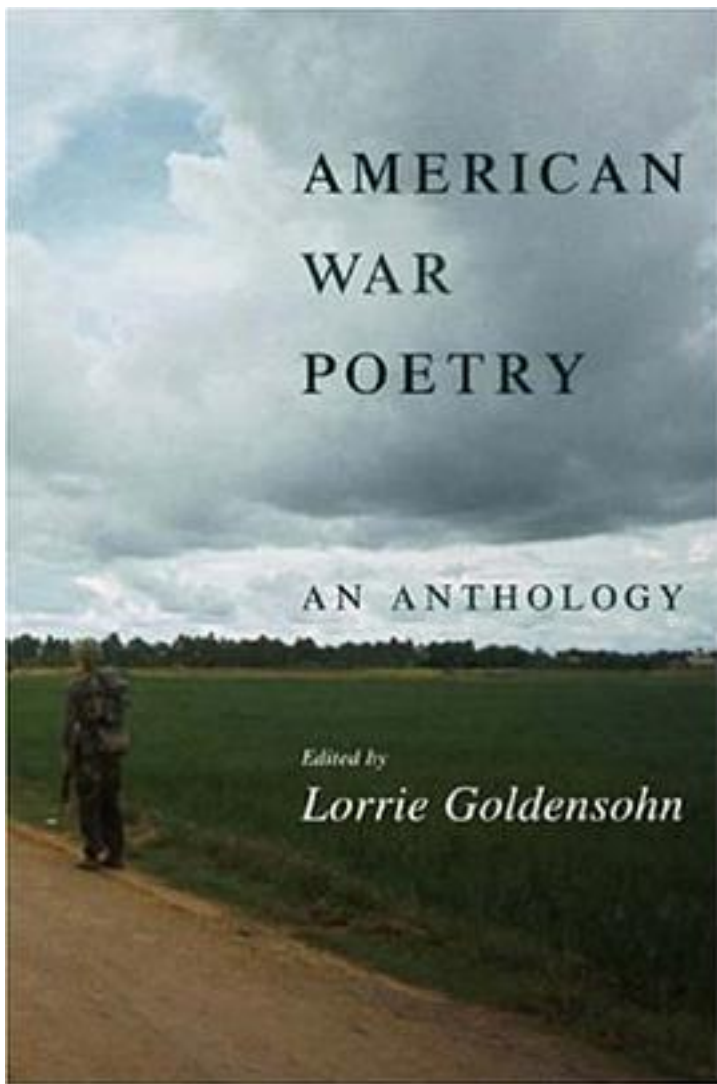


American War Poetry



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著者:Goldensohn, Lorrie 编

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American War Poetry spans the history of the nation. Beginning with the Colonial Wars of the eighteenth-century and ending with the Gulf Wars, this original and significant anthology presents four centuries of American men and women-soldiers, nurses, reporters, and embattled civilians-writing about war. American War Poetry opens with a ballad by a freed African American slave commenting on a skirmish with Indians in a Massachusetts meadow. Poems on the American Revolution follow, as well as poems on "minor" conflicts like the Mexican War and the Spanish-American Wars. This compact anthology has generous selections on the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnamese-American War, but it also includes an unusually large offering on American participation in the Spanish Civil War. Another section covers four hundred years of conflict with Native Americans, ending with poems by contemporary Indians who respond passionately and directly to their difficult history. The collection also reaches into current reaction to American involvement in Latin America, Bosnia, and the Gulf Wars. Showing the depth of feeling and the range of thinking with which Americans have confronted war, American War Poetry expands our sense of what poetry is made to do. While the birth of a national identity is documented in early poems, the anthology also conveys the growing sophistication of a uniquely American style. Although early war poems show that the first justification for war was purely defensive, as American global ambitions matured, American writers moved increasingly to deplore a homegrown imperialism and its terrible costs. While many familiar poems of patriotic ardor have been chosen, other poems show a steady interest in antiwar themes. Lorrie Goldensohn provides a brief biography for each poet and places each poem in its proper literary and historical context. Comprehensive and compelling, American War Poetry not only documents the birth and development of a national style of expression but shows the force of poetry working on the historical moment, making it come vitally alive.

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