# Contents

Editor's Note vii

Introduction 1

*Harold Bloom*

**African-American Poetry**

The Preacherly Text: African American Poetry and Vernacular Performance 7

*Marcellus Blount*

D.H. Lawrence and Black Writers 29

*Leo Hamalian*

**Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784)**

Introduction to *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley* 47

*Julian D. Mason, Jr.*

A Slave's Subtle War: Phillis Wheatley's Use of Biblical Myth and Symbol 69

*Sondra O'Neale*

**Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825–1911)**

"Let Me Make the Songs for the People": A Study of Frances Watkins Harper's Poetry 95

*Patricia Liggins Hill*

**Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906)**

Paul Dunbar and the Mask of Dialect 113

*John Keeling*

Paul Laurence Dunbar: Master Player in a Fixed Game 129

*Ralph Story*

**James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938)**

A Weapon of My Song: The Poetry of James Weldon Johnson 153

*Richard A. Long*
Claude McKay (1890-1948)
Claude McKay's Romanticism 165
   Geta J. LeSeur

Jean Toomer (1894-1967)
The Whitman Legacy and the Harlem Renaissance 177
   George B. Hutchinson

Sterling A. Brown (1901-1989)
The New Negro Poet and the Nachal Man: Sterling Brown's Folk Odyssey 193
   John S. Wright

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)
Jazz, Realism, and the Modernist Lyric:
The Poetry of Langston Hughes 205
   Anita Patterson

Countee Cullen (1903-1946)
"The Singing Man Who Must be Reckoned With": Private Desire and Public Responsibility
   in the Poetry of Countée Cullen 237
   Peter Powers
Dual Reality: Echoes of Blake's Tiger
   in Cullen's Heritage 265
   Ronald E. Sheasby

Melvin Beaunorus Tolson (1898-1966)
Evolution of Style in the Poetry of Melvin B. Tolson 273
   Mariann B. Russell
A Hamlet Rives Us: The Sonnets of Melvin B. Tolson 291
   Gary Smith

Works by the Poets 305
Works about the Poets 307
Biographical Notes 311
Contributors 319
Acknowledgments 323
Index 325