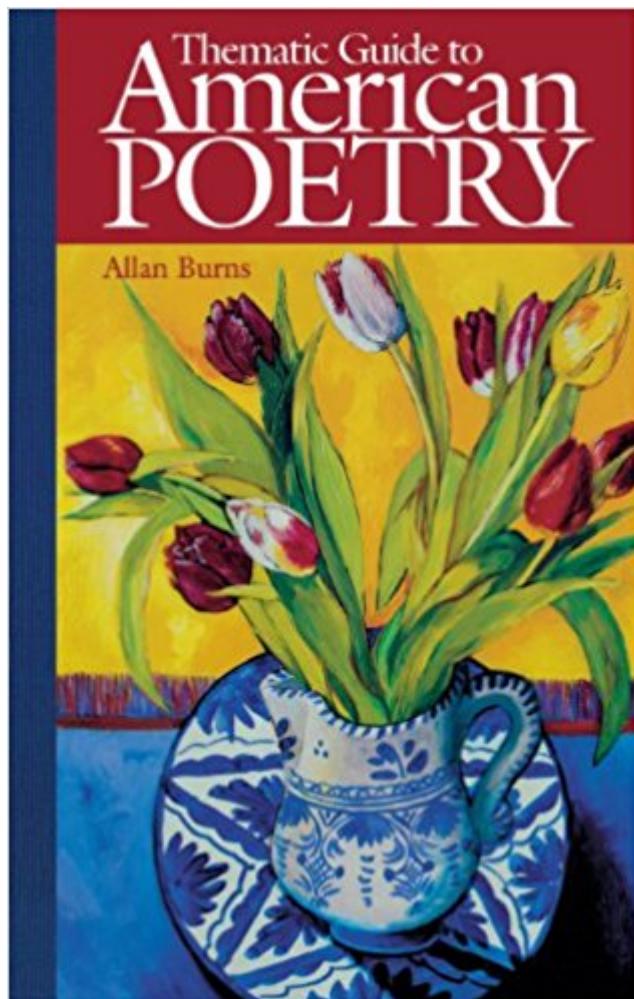


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# Thematic Guide To American Poetry:



## **Synopsis**

This unique poetry resource offers interpretations of 250 poems, representing the work of 86 poets from a wide spectrum of historical, contemporary, ethnic, and canonical writers. Organization of this volume facilitates easy access to information on poetry for users' individual purposes. The main section of the guide contains narrative essays on 21 alphabetically arranged themes that recur throughout the rich history of American poetry. In each section, the explications of individual poems are arranged chronologically to trace the evolution of a particular theme over time. Educators teaching thematic units will find relevant essays here appropriate as either background presentation, discussion ideas, or student assignments. Following each entry, the poems are listed with information about the anthologies in which they may be found. Most of the abbreviations used here correspond to the codes used in *The Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry in Anthology*, familiar to most librarians. This guide is ideal for librarians and teachers who need to identify and locate poems on a given theme, and for students and lovers of poetry who wish to enrich their understanding of the thematic meanings of poems.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The latest addition to the Greenwood series of thematic guides to literature for students features 21 narrative essays on such broad themes in American poetry as "Art and Beauty," "Family Relations," "Loss," and "War." The essays are arranged alphabetically, and each begins with a theme-related quotation followed by a chronologically arranged discussion of how the theme is treated differently

across individual poems. On average, chapters are 12 pages long and discuss 12 individual poems. Each chapter concludes with a list of anthologies in which each poem appears (abbreviations correspond closely with Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry in Anthologies). Brief biographical sketches of all the poets covered appear in the back of the volume along with a further reading list and an index. The aim of the guide is to "help students better understand what poems are saying, specifically against the wider backdrop of American poetic traditions." The narratives for each poem are pithy and clear, discussing only generally how the poem portrays the theme under discussion. Although author Burns, an English professor, tends to favor some of the same poets (250 poems are represented, but only 86 poets), the only criteria for inclusion is high-quality poetry of the U.S. that is readily available in standard anthologies. The limited space in a single volume necessarily requires somewhat arbitrary exclusiveness, but the poems that are chosen are well explicated. In essays that allude to poems discussed in other chapters, a referential note is made. Currently, although plenty of explication is available for individual landmark poems, guides that discuss American poems through broad-based thematic essays are scarce. Indexes like Columbia Granger's only have very literal subject indexing and cannot be solely relied upon. Thematic Guide to American Poetry provides a valuable outlet for students or teachers looking for poems on a given theme and is recommended for high-school, academic, and public libraries. RBBCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

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