



**Selected Letters of Robert Penn Warren: New  
Beginnings and New Directions, 1953--1968  
(Southern Literary Studies)**

*Robert Penn Warren*

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Volume four of the Selected Letters of Robert Penn Warren covers a crucial time of personal and professional rejuvenation in Warren's life. During the fifteen-year period spanned by this correspondence, he completed *Brother to Dragons*; *Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South*; and *Who Speaks for the Negro?* As these titles suggest, these years were marked by Warren's immersion in American history and his maturing interest in race relations. They also saw his return to lyric poetry, after a ten-year hiatus, with the publication of the Pulitzer Prize--winning collection *Promises*. Along with seeing the completion of some of his most successful work, this period was a time of momentous change in Warren's life, including his move to Yale University; his marriage to his second wife, Eleanor; and the birth of his two children. As a chronicle of Warren's thoughts on his family, his work, his friends, the state of literary studies, and the culture at large, these letters are invaluable.

Unlike many writers, Warren rarely drafted his correspondence with future readers and scholars in mind; he typically saved his prepared statements about the human condition and the state of the world for his poetry, fiction, and social commentary. His letters offer a candid and personal glimpse of Warren's relationships as well as his personal views on literature, politics, and social trends. Their recipients include Ralph Ellison, Allen Tate, Saul Bellow, Robert Lowell, Eudora Welty, and Louis Rubin, as well as Warren's editors, reviewers, collaborators, and other friends.

Providing an unusually vivid and personal account of Warren's rich and fully realized life, these missives are equally revealing of his thoughts on the state of contemporary American culture during this dynamic time in American history.

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