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Since the series' inception in 1915, the annual volumes of The Best American Short Stories have launched literary careers, showcased the most compelling stories of each year, and confirmed for all time the significance of the short story in our national literature. Now THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES OF THE CENTURY brings together the best -- fifty-six extraordinary stories that represent a century's worth of unsurpassed achievements in this quintessentially American literary genre. This expanded edition includes a new story from The Best American Short Stories 1999 to round out the century, as well as an index including every story published in the series.

Of all the writers whose work has appeared in the series, only John Updike has been represented in each of the last five decades, from his first appearance, in 1959, to his most recent, in 1998. Updike worked with coeditor Katrina Kenison to choose the finest stories from the years since 1915. The result is "extraordinary . . . A one-volume literary history of this country's immeasurable pains and near-infinite hopes" (Boston Globe).