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In the last fifty years Irish poets have produced some of the most exciting poetry in contemporary literature, writing about love and sexuality, violence and history, country and city. This book provides a unique introduction to major figures such as Seamus Heaney, and also introduces the reader to significant precursors like Louis MacNeice or Patrick Kavanagh, and vital contemporaries and successors: among others, Thomas Kinsella, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Paul Muldoon. Readers will find discussions of Irish poetry from the traditional to the modernist, written in Irish as well as English, from both North and South. This Companion provides cultural and historical background to contemporary Irish poetry in the contexts of modern Ireland but also in the broad currents of modern world literature. It includes a chronology and guide to further reading and will prove invaluable to students and teachers alike.