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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Alexander Street Press to release *Black Short Fiction*
- collection reveals literary and cultural influences from Africa, through Diaspora, to today**

(Alexandria, VA – May 20, 2004) Alexander Street Press has announced the creation of the first major electronic collection of short stories by black writers from Africa and the African Diaspora, to launch this fall. *Black Short Fiction* will present more than 150,000 pages of writings drawn from literary magazines, archives, and personal collections – including a great deal of ephemeral content and rare items that have never been seen before. A variety of traditions will be represented, ranging from early African oral traditions to today's hip-hop, and covering fables, parable, ballads, folk-tales, short stories, trickster tales, story cycles, and novellas.

North American coverage will start with Southern blacks, move through and beyond the Harlem Renaissance, and incorporate contemporary works. African Coverage will move from the earliest known stories through to today's writings from English-speaking Africa and by African writers living elsewhere. Alexander Street aims to give users the very oldest tales from Africa, along with modern stories about slavery, integration, civil rights, Black power, and other historical, social, psychological, and anthropological movements and issues – and everything in between.

The collection, say executives of Alexander Street, will show that the short story form came directly out of Africa and influenced literary forms that followed. The project also promises to show how the migration of this literature carried with it cultural influences that we see right through to today's modern language, politics, ideas, and behaviors.

"The writer Alex Haley was able to trace his roots back to The Gambia only because his mother and grandmother told him traditional stories," explains Eileen Lawrence, Alexander Street's vice president of sales and marketing. "When slaves were brought to the New World, all they could carry with them were their ideas. For Transatlantic Studies broadly speaking, not only for the study of literature, this database is going to bring tremendous value to scholarship."

"The building of the database will be like a story itself," said Stephen Rhind-Tutt, president of Alexander Street. "Our editors are ferreting out 10,000 stories by 250 well-known, major writers and another thousand or so writers who are less known. We're taking time to make sure that the collection will provide an accessible, revealing, and previously unseen way of interpreting the Diaspora."

Black Short Fiction will be available beginning in fall 2004. For advance purchase information, please call (800) 889-5937 ext. 4 or email sales@alexanderstreet.com. To be contacted when the database is available for review, please contact Jennifer Heffelfinger, manager of marketing and public relations (jheffelfinger@alexanderstreet.com or (800) 889-5937 ext. 5).

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Alexander Street Press, L.L.C., is an academic publisher of electronic full-text databases in the humanities and social sciences. Founded in June 2000, the company publishes collections in history, literature, women's studies, sociology, ethnic and diversity studies, popular culture, film studies, the arts, and other areas. Alexander Street Press is located in Alexandria, Virginia.

EDITORS: For additional information on Alexander Street Press and its products, please contact Eileen Lawrence, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, 800-889-5937, email lawrence@alexanderstreet.com, or visit <http://alexanderstreet.com>.

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