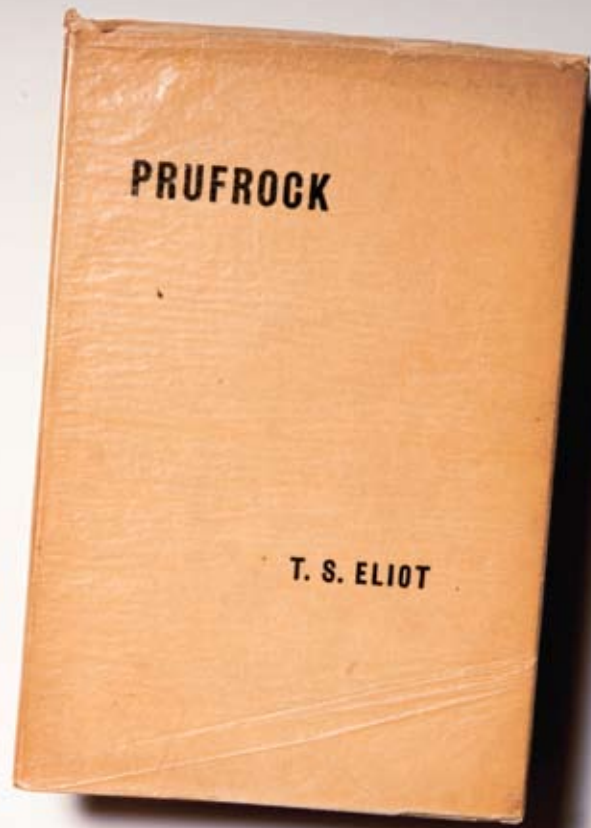


'DEMOCRATIC VISTAS':

Exploring the Raymond
Danowski Poetry Library

March 15-May 26, 2008 Schatten Gallery



Manuscript Archives & Rare Book Library

OF EMORY UNIVERSITY

spring 2008 ~ volume 2, number 1



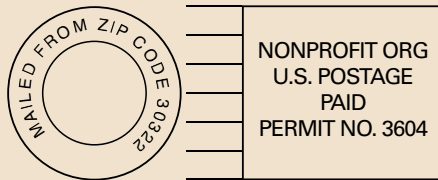
Bayard
July
Leaves
of
Grass.

Brooklyn, New York:
1855.



EMORY
LIBRARIES

Manuscript, Archives & Rare Book Library
Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University
540 Asbury Circle
Atlanta, Georgia 30322



EMORY
LIBRARIES

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Manuscript Archives & Rare Book Library

OF EMORY UNIVERSITY

TO SUBSCRIBE, CONTACT:

Denise Funk
 Manuscript, Archives & Rare Book Library
 Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University
 Atlanta, Georgia 30322
 dmfunk@emory.edu

Additional information about MARBL's holdings, research services, and special events can be found on the web at <http://marbl.library.emory.edu>.

HOURS

Fall Semester:
 Monday–Friday 8:30a–5:30p, Saturday 9:00a–5:30p
 EXCEPTIONS for holidays and special events

Front cover:
 The first printing of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, self-published by the author in 1855 and featuring, opposite the title page, a portrait of Whitman himself. This copy was signed by fellow poet Bayard Taylor in the month of publication.

Back cover:
 The first printing of T. S. Eliot's second book and first book of poems, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917). This copy is inscribed by Eliot "To Miss Emily Hale."

Photography by Photo/Video a department of Emory Creative Group; Alice Walker photo by Andrea Roth.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Raymond Danowski writes elsewhere in this issue of his early interest in books and his decision in the mid-1970s to try to assemble a comprehensive collection of all twentieth-century poetry in English. In embracing such an ambition, he set himself up to fail, but what a grand failure his collection now is.

The 75,000-volume Raymond Danowski Poetry Library is believed to be among the larger libraries ever assembled by a single collector. Ever since its arrival at Emory in 2003, library staff have been meticulously cataloging the full contents of this vast collection. To date, a third of the collection is fully cataloged and accessible to readers for the first time, while the ongoing work of cataloging the remainder of the collection continues at a brisk pace.

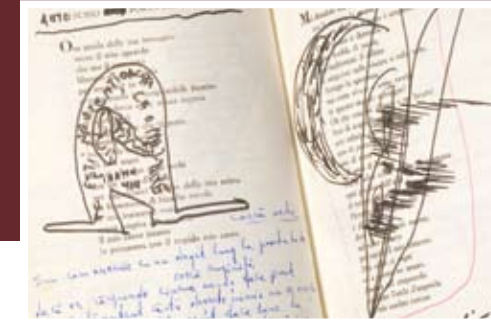
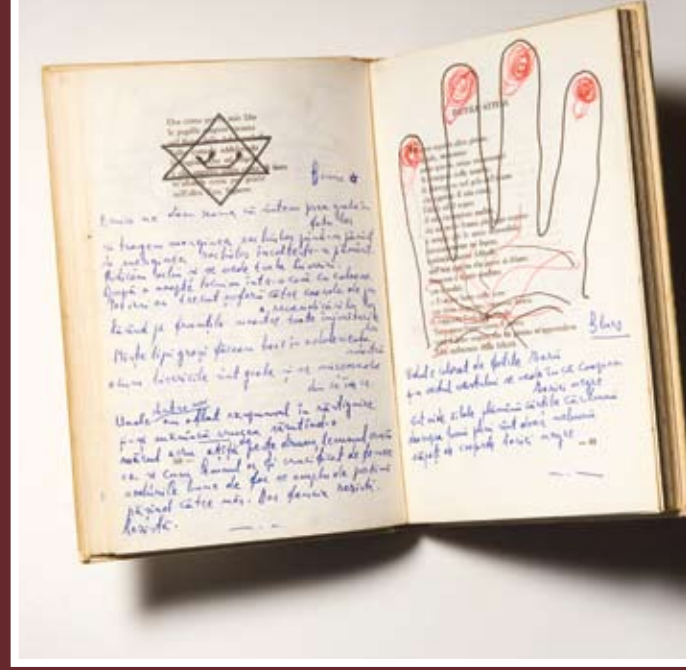
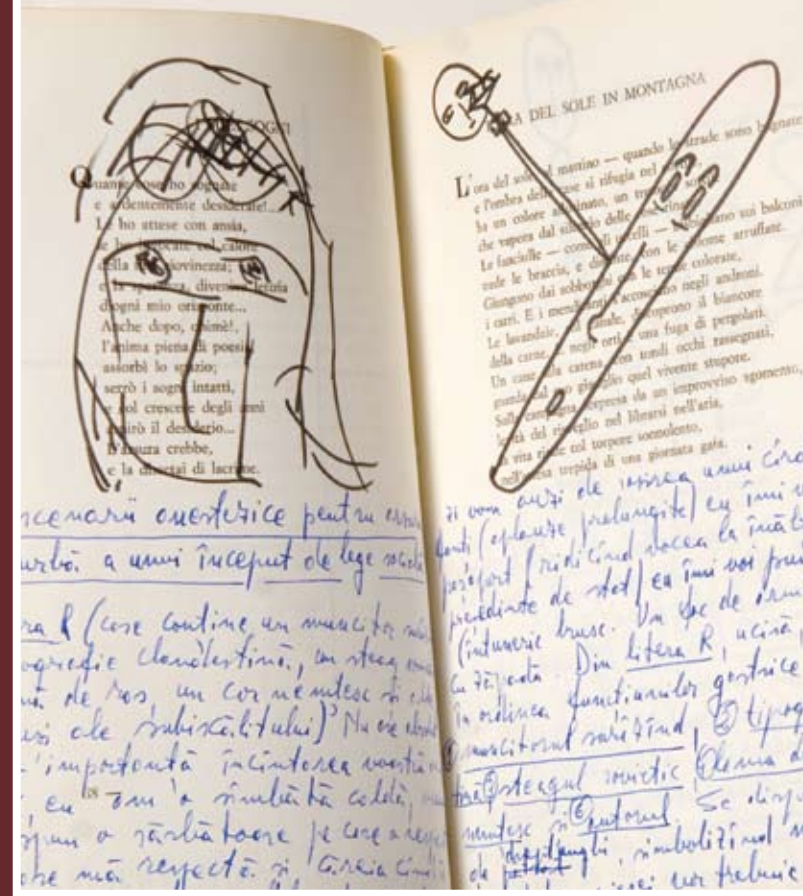
MARBL houses many libraries within the library; that is, personal collections that were assembled by an individual for his or her own use and enjoyment before the collection came to Emory. Although none matches the sheer size of the Danowski Poetry Library, each has its own particular strength and value. Indeed, individual collectors have played a vital role in the growth of Emory's research collections. While university libraries must build broad collections that span the academic disciplines, collectors can focus intently on a particular area of interest and plunge deep. Their collections are testimony both to their passion and to their in-depth knowledge of their chosen field.

Among MARBL's noteworthy holdings is the rare-book collection of Charles Howard Candler, former president of Coca-Cola and an Emory benefactor; the Paul and Mildred Seydell Collection of books relating to Belgian history, literature, and art; the J. M. Edelstein Collection of American poetry; the library of Carter G. Woodson, popularly known as "the father of Negro history"; and Emory Professor Ronald Schuchard's collection of poet Seamus Heaney.

These and other such collections each had their start in the vision and commitment of an individual collector. While research libraries are always growing, the acquisition of a collection en bloc propels a library forward. Sometimes a collector places his or her collection at Emory because of the University's reputation for excellence in a chosen field; at other times, the collector may set a marvelous new direction of collecting by placing his or her collection here.

In either case, MARBL offers a way for the individual's collection to continue to do its work for generations to come. What libraries also offer the individual collector is our shared appreciation and acknowledgment that their passion will be remembered. &

Stephen Ennis
 Director



UNPACKING THE DANOWSKI LIBRARY

UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES

ONE OF THE MORE CURIOUS ITEMS THAT CAME TO LIGHT as the Danowski Library volumes shed their packing boxes was a slim volume of poems in Italian called *L'alito eterna* by the obscure Italian poet Renata Pescanti Botta. What made this book so intriguing was that the margins and empty space in the first half were filled with handwritten verse and illustrations in Romanian; the cover bore the manuscript title *Femeia neagr a unui culcu de ho i*. The only clue to its authorship was the handwritten name "Andrei Codrescu" on the cover.

The book sat on a shelf for a few years until I came across it in 2006 and decided to investigate this puzzling item. The first step was to work out what I had. I guessed that the manuscript poems were by the Romanian-American poet Andrei Codrescu, well known for his commentaries and reporting for National Public Radio, but I wondered whether his verse was merely a translation of the Italian or original work. A faculty member at Emory is fluent in both Romanian and Italian, so I took the work to Dalia Judovitz, National Endowment of the Humanities Professor of French and Comparative Literature, who was able to tell me that the poems were original work and were, in fact, amusing riffs on the original Italian poems.

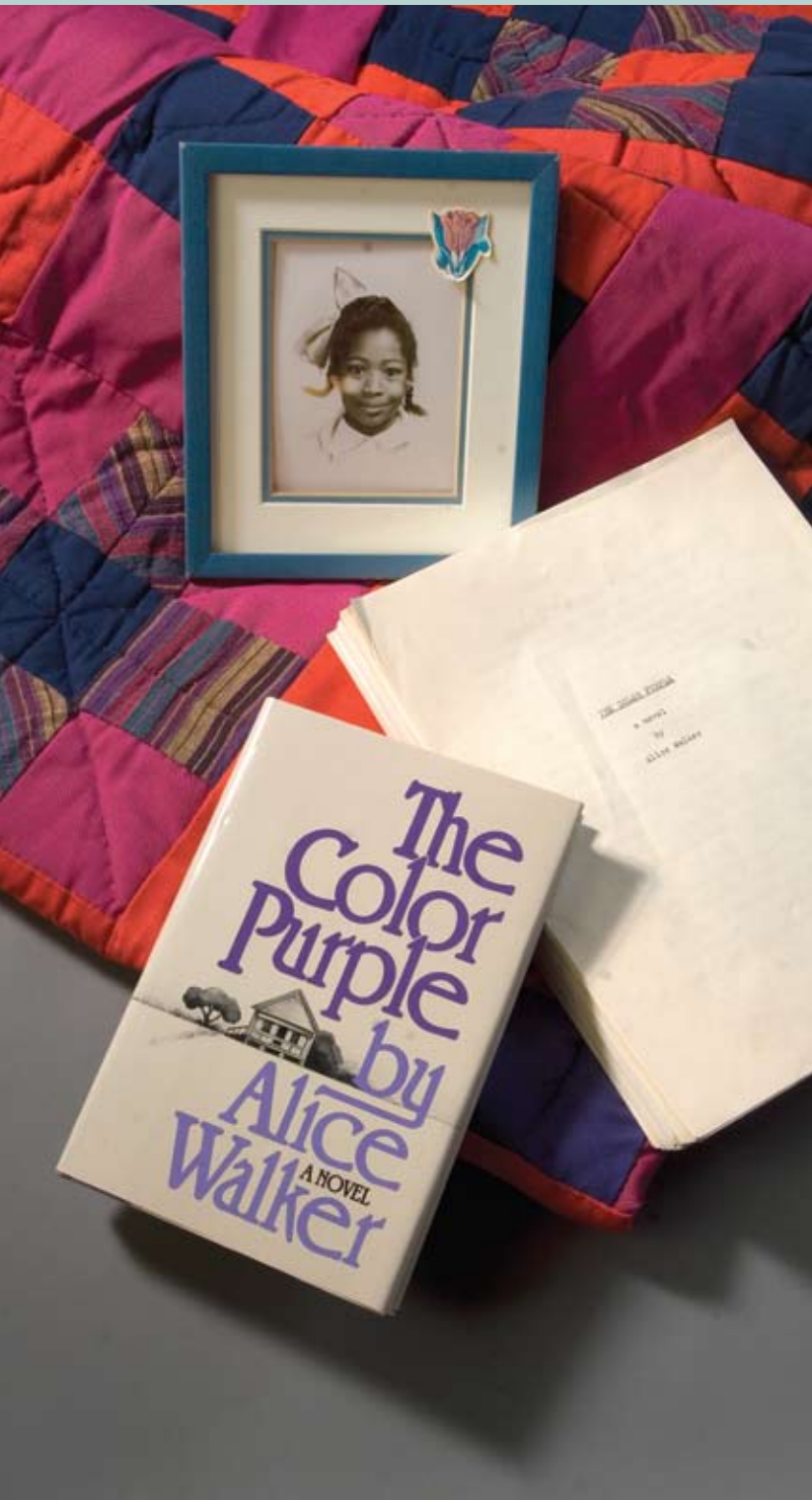
With this knowledge, I decided to contact Codrescu directly. He replied to my email almost instantly and was very

excited to discover this relic from his past, though he had only a vague recollection of it. I sent a photocopy to him, which prompted his memories to return. He left Romania at age nineteen in 1965, traveling via Rome to arrive in the United States in 1966. This book was one that he acquired during his stay in Italy and brought with him to the United States. The poems were written during this period and, as such, are some of his earliest works. He had kept copies of some of the poems, but many were unknown.

Copies of the photocopy I had supplied to Codrescu eventually made it to his editor in Romania, where there was great excitement over the discovery of such early work by a well-known Romanian writer. The manuscript poems were transcribed, and publication was planned. When the editor saw the colorful illustrations that the youthful Codrescu added to the text, then a full digital scan of the work was sent to Romania to be published in addition to the transcribed poems. The end result was a handsome volume published in October 2007 by Editura Vinea of Bucharest with a foreword by the prominent Romanian poet Ruxandra Cesereanu. &

by David Faulds
 Rare Book Librarian

THE ALICE WALKER PAPERS COME HOME



ALICE WALKER'S BERKELEY HOME IS BARELY VISIBLE FROM THE STREET. Entering her back door and passing through a garden where Walker's two dogs, Milo and Marley, play, leads to the study where Walker often writes. This room and an adjoining one are lined with file cabinets containing nearly forty years of correspondence with fellow writers, family, and close friends; drafts of her novels, stories, and poems; recorded interviews, private journals, and hundreds of family photographs from all periods of Walker's life. Also present are cherished personal effects, including a quilt that Walker made while writing *The Color Purple*. This is how I found the Walker papers when I visited this past November in order to pack the entire archive for transfer to Emory.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker was born in Eatonton, Georgia, in 1944. She attended Spelman College in Atlanta for two years before transferring to Sarah Lawrence in New York. Walker's first book, a collection of poems titled *Once*, was written while Walker was still a student at Sarah Lawrence and was published in 1968, during a time when Walker was also active in the civil rights movement.

In the 1970s Walker played a key role in the recovery of the work of Zora Neale Hurston. Walker and Charlotte Hunt



located Hurston's unmarked grave and arranged for a headstone to be placed there, while also promoting the revival of interest in Hurston's work.

Walker is the author of more than a dozen novels and collections of short stories, including *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *Meridian* (1976), *The Color Purple* (1982), *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (1982), *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), and *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart* (2005). Walker has been recognized with numerous prizes and awards for her writing, including being the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

In a statement accompanying the acquisition, Walker explained, "I chose Emory to receive my archive because I myself feel at ease and comfortable at Emory. I can imagine in years to come that my papers, my journals and letters will find themselves always in the company of people who care about many of the things I do: culture, community, spirituality, scholarship, and the blessings of ancestors."

The completeness of Walker's archive makes it truly exceptional, according to Rudolph Byrd, professor of American Studies. "The archive contains journals that she has been

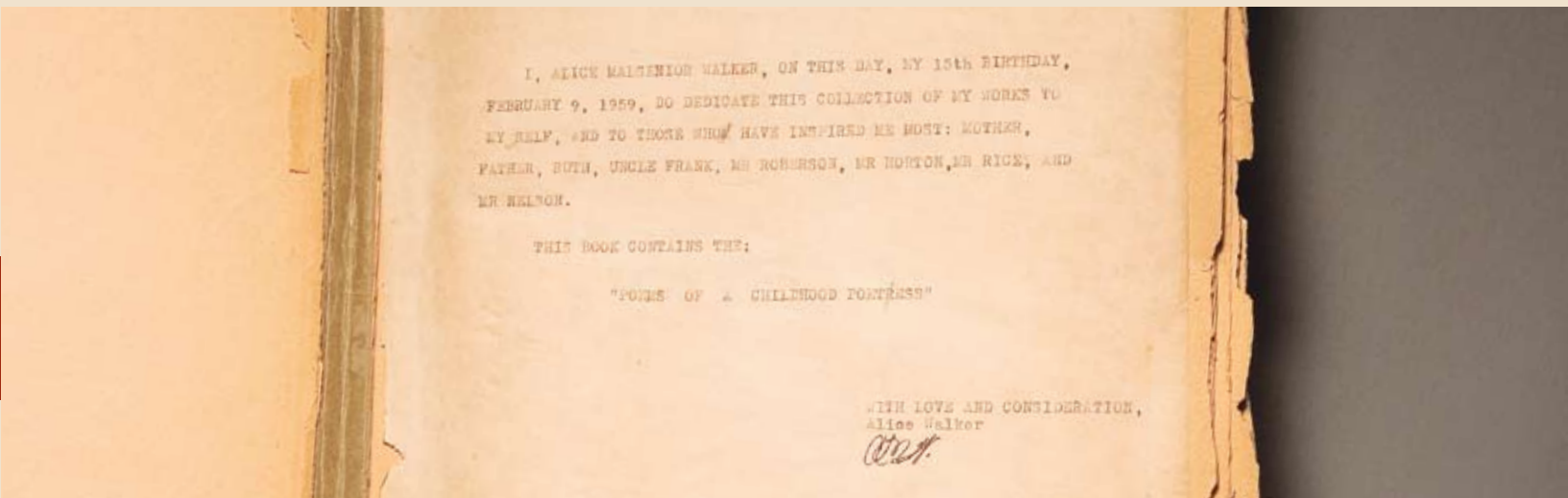
keeping since she was fourteen or fifteen years old," says Byrd, who is also a personal friend of Walker.

Filling 122 boxes, the collection is more than just a record of a prolific career. It also documents the strong connections between her professional and personal lives. For Walker, even the manner of her living is an art.

In addition to drafts of all her writings, including her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Color Purple*, the archive also contains Walker's initial film treatment for *The Color Purple* (a version that was never used), along with syllabi and teaching notes from courses she has taught. Among the earliest items in the collection, and one of the most cherished, is a handmade book of poetry compiled when Walker was just fifteen titled "Poems of a Childhood Poetess" (see below).

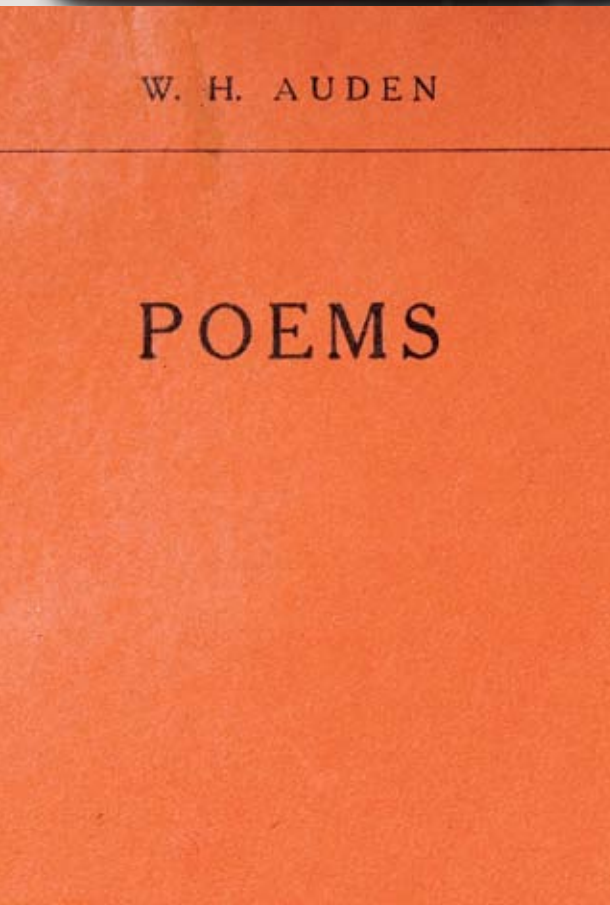
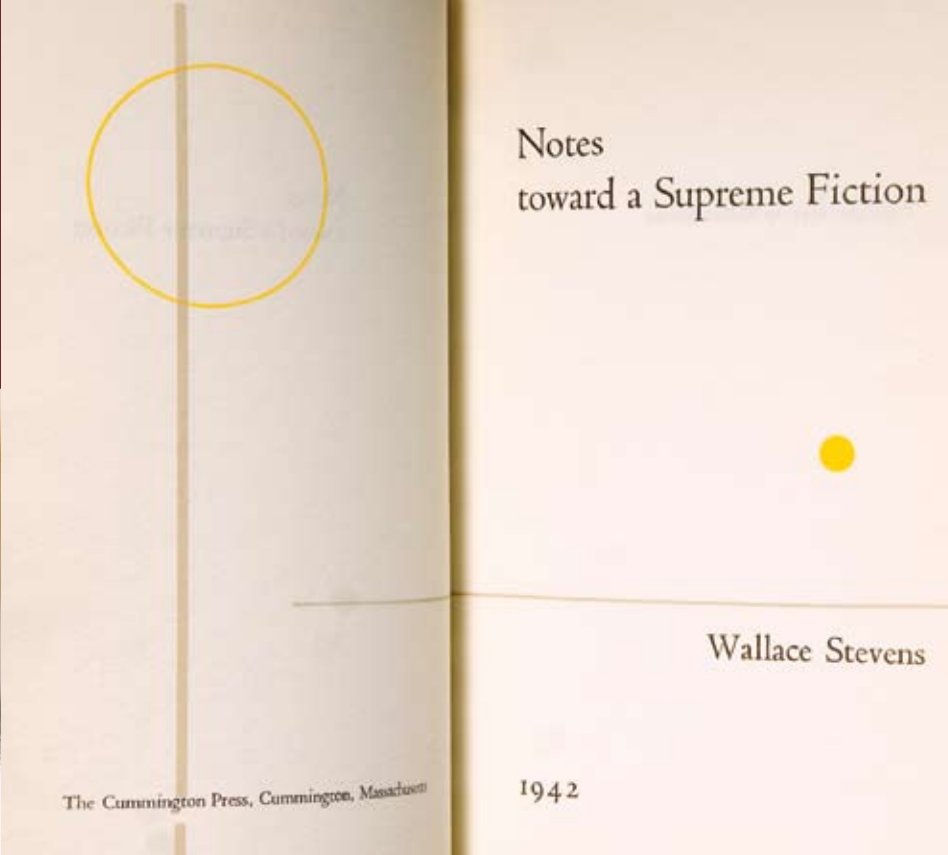
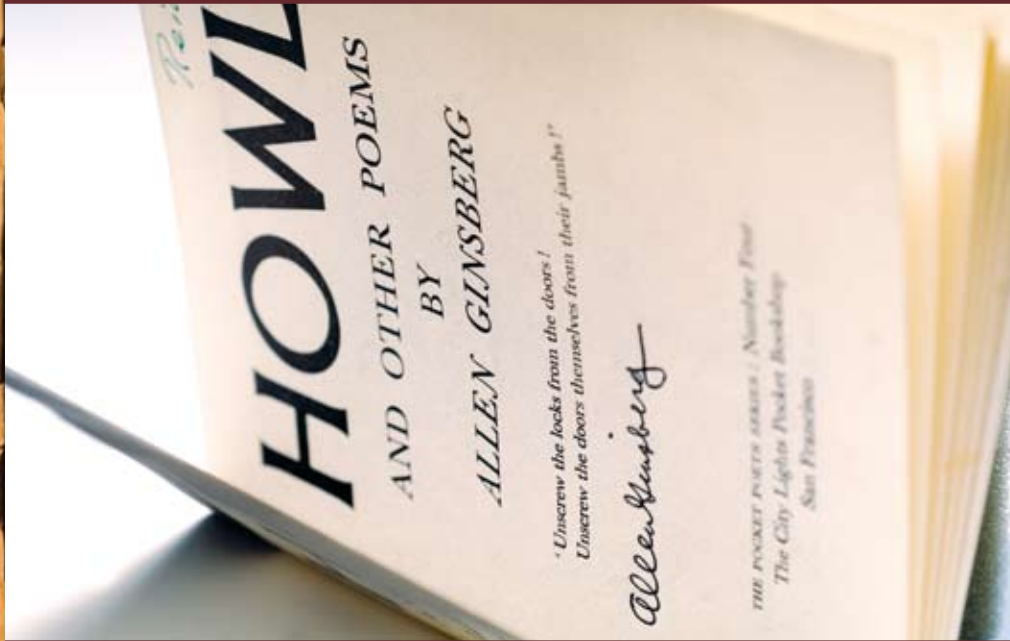
This spring, library staff will begin the time-consuming work of cataloging the collection and making it ready for research. Once opened—in a little more than a year—the Alice Walker papers promise to deepen greatly our understanding of the work of this major American writer. &

Elizabeth Russey
Manuscript Archivist



"People are known by the records they keep. If it isn't in the records, it will be said it didn't happen. That is what history is: a keeping of records."—Alice Walker

FROM PRIVATE DELIGHT TO PUBLIC PLEASURE: The Danowski Library



THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN THE LARGEST POETRY LIBRARY IN PRIVATE HANDS UNTIL ITS ARRIVAL AT EMORY UNIVERSITY IN 2003, the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, given its sheer breadth, would be impressive on its own. However, when one considers that it was largely the effort of a single collector, working without a computer database, and developed in the course of twenty-five years, the scale can seem staggering. Certainly, the fact that all 75,000 volumes came over from storage in two sea-freight containers the size of tractor-trailer rigs is indicative of its scope.

Remarkable for its range and depth, the library represents Raymond Danowski's extraordinary desire to gather every book of poetry published in English—a desire the library largely achieved. Its presence here at Emory makes poetry central to campus life and has established the University internationally as one of the crucial centers of modern and contemporary poetry. The Danowski Poetry Library consists of rare books, chapbooks, little magazines, one-off journals, limited-edition broadsides, audio recordings, unique manuscripts, and even visual art from the United States, Britain, Ireland, Australia, India, Canada, Scotland, and South Africa. Ranging from W. H. Auden to Louis Zukofsky, the collection starts both chronologically and symbolically with a first edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*—arguably the first modern book of poetry—printed by the author and published on July 4, 1855.

"I greet you at the start of a great career," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote to a near-anonymous Whitman. In turn, Whitman used these prophetic words to promote his work, in the process creating the world of literature's first blurb. Many works in the Danowski Library are not so bold or auspicious or mature; indeed, many are downright ephemeral. Yet whether printed in a beautiful limited edition or by a mimeograph

[bottom left to bottom right] W. H. Auden's first book, titled simply *Poems*, and printed on a small hand press by fellow poet Stephen Spender in 1928; Harriet Monroe's influential little magazine *Poetry*, established in 1912; first printing of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*; Wallace Stevens's *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*, printed by Cummings Press in 1942; one of Frank O'Hara's rare publications, *Oranges* was produced on a mimeograph machine and illustrated with an original painting by Grace Hartigan in 1953; and poet Lucille Clifton's well-worn copy of Langston Hughes's first book, *The Weary Blues*.

Remarkable for its range and depth, the library represents Raymond Danowski's extraordinary desire to gather every book of poetry published in English.

machine, whether juvenilia or the mature work of a great poet, whether appreciated at the time of publication or only in hindsight, these works all have a home in the Danowski Library. Given that many works of poetry are not printed in large numbers, the collection contains many rare works that would be difficult, if not impossible, to locate today.

Since the arrival of the Danowski Library, staff throughout the Woodruff Library have been engaged in the time-consuming work of cataloging the full contents of this history-making library. While that work continues, this spring Emory mounts the first major exhibition of the collection, "Democratic Vistas: Exploring the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library." Among the significant materials on view are numerous examples of "the book before the book"—books poets either repudiated or never reprinted, or books so rare that, for all practical purposes, they are unknown to a general readership. The library has books written by poets under other names or anonymously; books issued in handwritten editions or paid for out of pocket and long out of print; books all but lost in a fire or those the poet later wished burned.

Such a selection shows the breadth of the Danowski library, both its democratic scope and the range of poets included therein. &

by Kevin Young
Atticus Haygood Professor of Creative Writing and English;
Curator, Raymond Danowski Poetry Library



THE DECADE OF THE 1960S AT EMORY—AS AT OTHER AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND IN SOCIETY GENERALLY—WAS MARKED BY THE CONSTANT INTERACTION AMONG COMPLEX CULTURAL AND POLITICAL TRENDS. A timeline of major trends and developments at Emory begins in 1962 when the University was a party to legal proceedings that led to a Georgia Supreme Court decision permitting private educational institutions to integrate their student bodies. In January 1963 two African American students enrolled in the School of Nursing and earned master’s degrees in nursing in December of that same year. In 1965, against the backdrop of celebration of the University’s fiftieth anniversary and the launch of a major fund-raising campaign, a *Time* magazine cover story asked “Is God Dead?” and featured Emory religion professor Thomas J. J. Altizer as one a number of theologians who claimed that God had died. In 1966 Emory students helped host a city-wide rally known as “Affirmation Viet Nam” and also organized “Horizon 1966,” a symposium on conservatism. By 1968 Emory students were reacting to the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. In 1969 the campus experienced waves of protests relating to race and the Vietnam War.

As Emory moved into the 1970s, the spontaneity, open expression, and nonconformist behavior that had come to characterize much of the 1960s carried over into the new decade. Student protests on campus continued, with the killing of students at Kent State University as a focal point. Local issues ranging from military recruiting on campus to funding for WEMO, the campus radio station, sparked controversy as well. In academic life, students began to have more options in meeting course and degree requirements. With regard to campus life, dormitory regulations became less restrictive, with women students allowed to stay out until later hours and to host male guests in their rooms for limited periods of time.

The cultural life of the campus reflected these trends as well. Traditional aspects of the arts endured, with performances by the Men’s Glee Club and the Women’s Chorale, and classical music

continued to come to the campus in the form of visiting artists and ensembles. At the same time, campus theater saw the experimental staging of new works by dramatists considered part of the counter-culture of the time. Even the college yearbooks reflected a counter-culture theme by combining traditional group pictures and lists of honors with graffiti-like titles, poetry, and photographs relating to war, poverty, politics, and the environment.

One of the longer-lasting efforts engineered by students was an annual Creative Arts Festival. In 1966, for example, the Creative Arts Festival featured poetry readings and discussions led by Diane Wakoski and Paul Blackburn, who were associated with the Beat poets of mid-century. Four decades later, these two poets are among those whose works are featured prominently in the J. M. Edelstein Poetry Collection and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library (see cover story), two of the major poetry collections held by the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library.

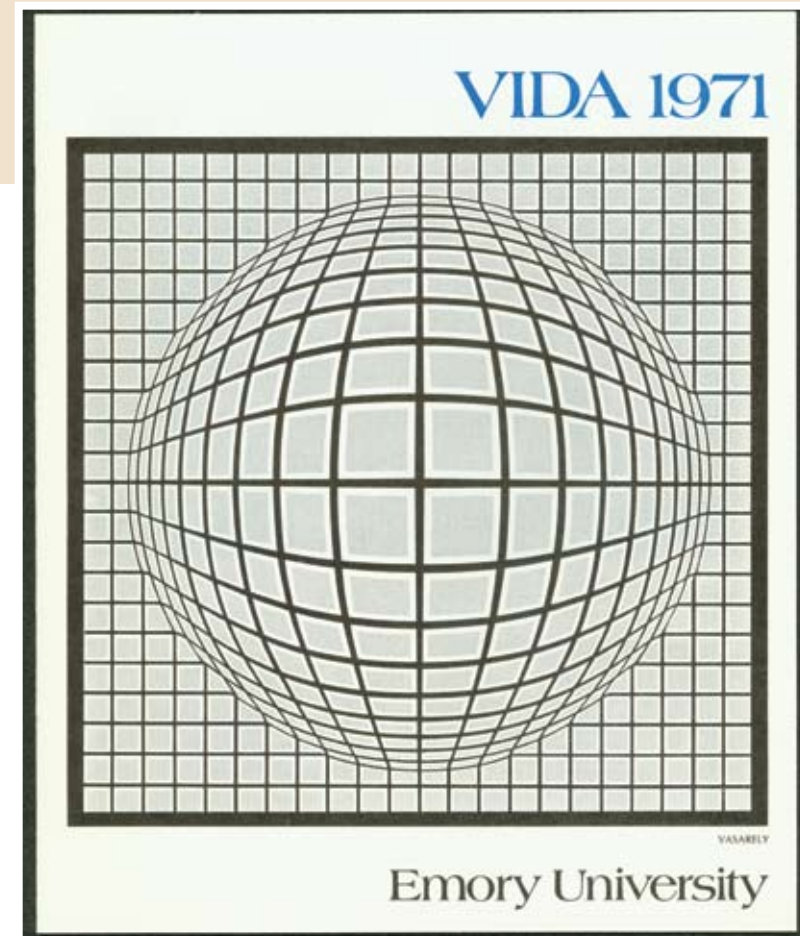
During these years, determined students made many efforts to capture the attention of the campus community and to engage its members in meaningful conversation. A recurring criticism during the campus turmoil of the late 1960s was the complaint that there was no mechanism for meaningful discussion among students, faculty, and administrators. In 1970 students launched an effort titled “Ventures in Dialog and Action.” VIDA, as the program was known, was to be an experiment in participation, an experience in dialog, and an exercise in possibilities. Its organizers intended VIDA to be a yearly symposium, student run and student initiated, that would bring together the entire University community for a critical examination of vital issues and questions. The student organizers took the “venture” in VIDA’s title to heart, experimenting with various program formats, which included traditional lectures and discussions and then later expanded to include arts performances and exhibitions showcasing theater, modern and folk dance, and the arts of batik and silk screening. The hope was that the “dialog” aspects of VIDA would

lead to “action” as a result of the new ideas and approaches under discussion.

Themes of annual VIDA programs give some idea of the nature of the discussions. In 1970 programs considered “The University and the Humanely Desirable Future,” and in 1971 the topic was “Whose America.” The program for 1972 moved beyond a single symposium to a year-long series of events and activities brought together under the broad subject, “Experiments in Transforming the Environment.” From November 1971 through January 1972, VIDA hosted artists from Sculptures in the Environment (SITE). In March, Buckminster Fuller appeared on campus. The final sessions in April included a multimedia presentation on Emory’s future environment, a discussion of a “car-less campus,” and environmental walking tours.

A group of four environmental sculptures was proposed and later installed near the Woodruff Library. During installation, a large, hand-lettered sign read, “These four holes, soon to be transformed by the VIDA/SITE project, are all that remain of four huge hardwoods. While the university has an admirable policy of replanting lost trees, inadequate protective measures have resulted in the loss of many such fine old trees.” One of the last VIDA sessions in 1974, “A Venture in Community,” included an invitation to watch the movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*—which was shown on the wall of the old gymnasium—and then to spend the night on the athletic field.

The environmental sculptures were among the more lasting legacies of VIDA, remaining intact and in place for more than a decade. The last traces of them disappeared when construction began to expand the Woodruff Library in 1996. The mimeographed handouts and handwritten promotional materials about these programs held by the Emory University Archives are as ephemeral



as much of VIDA itself. As a co-chair of VIDA wrote in 1971, “VIDA is only an idea, not an institution and when it does not work anymore, it should be discontinued. It is not a program that perpetuates itself. Its vitality is found in . . . participation.”

Vestiges of VIDA are evident in twenty-first-century developments such as “Classroom on the Quad” dialogs and sustainability initiatives. Treatment of themes and the means to bring them to the attention of the campus may change over time, but the desire to engage the community in meaningful conversation and positive action—a concept that emerged from the restless character of the campus in the 1960s and 1970s—endures. &



OTHER VOICES

A LIBRARY AS COMPLETE AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT

by Raymond Danowski

IN THE EARLY 1970S “UNE BIBLIOTHEQUE IMAGINAIRE” WAS TAKING SHAPE IN MY MIND. Was it possible to build a library of all twentieth-century poetry in English: first editions, the little magazines, the small presses, the minutiae, the ephemera? How this library came to Emory has much to do with my own childhood and with the vision of Ron Schuchard, Goodrich C. White Professor of English at Emory.

My father, who had a violent temper, warned me not to touch his night-school textbooks. As a child, I would sit on the floor in front of his small bookcase trying to read the lettering on the spines. I borrowed my first book from a mobile library.

Burke Avenue was my elevated train stop returning from school in the Bronx. I did my homework in the Norwegian ice cream parlor there and diagonally across the street in a candy store where I was allowed to read stacks of comic books everyday. Then, by chance, during a class visit to the local branch library of the New York Public Library—one of the pearls of the city—I discovered what I considered to be *the book*: *The Count of Monte Cristo*. During the next four years, I read five or six books a week: the Hardy Boys; the Don Camillo satirical tales by Giovanni Guareschi; all of Poe.

I loved reading Poe’s poetry out loud. My uncle, James Malcolm, an aspiring actor, gave me a dramatic reading of *The Raven*, then my favorite. Another uncle, Paul Danowski, who was a bartender in Manhattan, played the British soccer pools. Whoever placed his bets in England sent him poetry by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice. From then on, the twentieth century was, for me, a world defined by Auden.

I traveled by subway from the Bronx to high school in Manhattan at 87th street and West End Avenue. The school had a beautiful, high-ceilinged library, a roof-top basketball court, and exceptionally good teachers. I wrestled with Virgil’s Latin but learned to love *The Aeneid*.

My aunt, Catherine Malcolm, who worked at Columbia University, helped me get an after-school job at the Burgess-Carpenter Library. It was an opportunity to read voraciously and do just enough book shelving to appease Mr. Palmer, the librarian. Co-workers were two guys my age and a large contingent of laid-back doctoral students in English literature.

Later, when I began collecting myself, I set out to build a contextual collection, envisioning a symmetrical structure that would include books related to issues in the twentieth century that influenced the poets, from the Spanish Civil War to Vietnam. Strong author collections would be crucial and be as complete as luck would have it.

I didn’t own a computer, so I created this library keeping every publication and its condition in my head like the conductor of

a symphony orchestra working with the score in his head. Leading the string and woodwind sections, respectively, were Bernard Stone of Turret Books, London, and Richard Aaron of Am Here Books, now of Illinois. Both men were passionate about poets and about the poetry they liked; they further acted as conduits and staging posts for other dealers, as scouts, as bidders at auction, and as devil’s advocates.

My first collected book was the Spiral Press edition of Poe with a copy of the periodical *Merlin*. To paraphrase Geoffrey B. Charlesworth, who writes on the obsession of gardening, I want to say that book collecting is fun—serious fun possibly, but always an antidote to the idiocies of life and the occasional pretensions of academia. Book collecting is an outlet for fanaticism, passion, love, and rationality without their drawbacks.

To circle back to my beginning, Ron Schuchard and I met at graduates needing access to special collections, of creating a new special collections library at Emory with study rooms



where undergraduates could handle rare books, feel the magic, and simultaneously be online locating other examples around the world. I thought immediately of those friends at Burgess-Carpenter trusting me in their intellectual world, letting me experience the pleasure of finding an as-new copy of a rare book and holding it in my hands. I voted for Emory right then. &

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 18 “THE STATE AND FATE OF LITERARY REVIEWING”
5:00 p.m., Jones Room, Robert W. Woodruff Library

March 25 READING BY ALICE WALKER
6:00 p.m., Glenn Memorial Auditorium

“A Fine Excess’: A Three-Day Celebration of Poetry”

With Richard Wilbur, W. D. Snodgrass, Mark Strand, J. D. McClatchy, Mary Jo Salter, and Other Waywiser Press Poets

All events are in the Jones Room, Robert W. Woodruff Library, unless otherwise noted.

April 2 POETRY READING BY W. D. SNODGRASS
Chair, National Endowment for the Arts
Opening Remarks by Dana Gioia
5:00 p.m., Carlos Museum Reception Hall

RECEPTION AND EXHIBITION VIEWING OF:

“Democratic Vistas’: Exploring the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library”

Curated by Kevin Young, Atticus Haygood Professor of English and Creative Writing

6:15 p.m., Schatten Gallery, Third Floor, Robert W. Woodruff Library

April 3 POETRY READINGS by Jeffrey Harrison, J. D. McClatchy, Eric McHenry, Mary Jo Salter, Deborah Warren, and Clive Watkins; and interviews with Mark Strand and W. D. Snodgrass

POETRY READING BY MARK STRAND
6:00 p.m., Cannon Chapel

April 4 POETRY READINGS by Morri Creech, Erica Dawson, Joseph Harrison, and Greg Williamson; interview with Richard Wilbur

POETRY READING BY RICHARD WILBUR
5:00 p.m., Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts

Fall 2008 THE RICHARD ELLMANN LECTURES IN MODERN LITERATURE
WITH UMBERTO ECO

Call 404.727.7620 or visit <http://marbl.library.emory.edu> for the most recent details on these and other upcoming MARBL-sponsored events.

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