

Elizabeth Hardwick:

An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Hardwick, Elizabeth, 1916-2007
Title	Elizabeth Hardwick Papers
Dates:	1934-2001
Extent:	10 boxes (4.20 linear feet)
Abstract:	The papers contain manuscripts of Hardwick's writings, particularly <i>Bartleby in Manhattan</i> and <i>Sleepless Nights</i> , book reviews, conference papers and lectures, introductions, short stories, and tributes. In addition, there are articles, awards, biographical information, correspondence with friends and husband Robert Lowell, and photographs of Hardwick, Robert Lowell, and others.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-01829
Language:	English
Access	Open for research. Photocopies of letters belonging to Princeton University may not be photographed or reproduced without permission. Correspondence from Darryl Pinckney is restricted until 2039.

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Gift, 1991 (G 8738); Purchase, 2002 (R 15001)
Processed by	Jennifer B. Patterson, 1993; Liz Murray, 2002
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Born July 27, 1916, Elizabeth Hardwick grew up with ten brothers and sisters in Lexington, Kentucky. She attended local schools, and received a master's degree in English from the University of Kentucky in 1939. Shortly thereafter, Hardwick moved to New York, and began classes at Columbia University, where she would matriculate for the next two years.

The contrast between life in Kentucky and in New York inspired Hardwick to write her first novel, *The Ghostly Lover*, which was published in 1945. The plot focused on the emotional development of a southern woman who has moved to New York, which she adopts as her home. Hardwick received critical attention for her talented prose style, as well as her descriptions of people and places.

After the book was published, Philip Rahv, an editor of the *Partisan Review*, asked Hardwick to become a contributor. Her appearance in this journal marked the beginning of a long career in literary and social criticism. She went on to publish well-received essays in *Partisan Review*, *The New Republic*, and *Harper's*. In 1947, Hardwick won a Guggenheim Fellowship for fiction.

Two years later, Hardwick met and married the poet Robert Lowell. They spent the next decade traveling in Europe and moving around the United States where Lowell taught poetry at the University of Iowa, the University of Indiana, and the University of Cincinnati. In 1954, they settled in Boston, where they would remain for the next six years. While in Boston, Hardwick published a second novel, *The Simple Truth*, in 1955, and gave birth in 1957 to her only child, Harriet Lowell.

The Lowells returned to Manhattan in 1960, and Hardwick began editing a compilation of letters by William James, which was published the next year. In 1963, a printer's strike shut down the book review offices of *The New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune*. Hardwick, who had long bemoaned the state of book reviewing in the United States, met with a group of friends to found the *New York Review of Books*. The NYRB became one of the most controversial and intellectually challenging journals in the United States, and Hardwick served as an advisory editor since its founding.

Hardwick continued to publish critical essays throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and was the first woman to win the George Jean Nathan Award for outstanding drama criticism in 1967. Many of her essays were compiled and published in book form in *A View of My Own: Essays on Literature and Society* (1962), *Seduction and Betrayal: Women and Literature* (1974), and *Bartleby in Manhattan* (1986).

Hardwick's third novel, *Sleepless Nights*, was published in 1979. Its semi-autobiographical nature, focusing on the reminiscences of a woman named Elizabeth, received almost unanimous critical acclaim. *Sleepless Nights* was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award in 1980.

Hardwick continued to be an influential literary and social commentator. Anne Tyler wrote of her, "Whatever her subject, Hardwick has a gift for coming up with descriptions so thoughtfully selected, so exactly right, that they strike the reader as inevitable." Hardwick died in Manhattan on December 2, 2007, at the age of ninety-one.

Scope and Contents

1991 Acquisition

Seven boxes of creative works, correspondence, printed material, articles and photographs, 1934-1991 (bulk 1960-90) represent Elizabeth Hardwick's life and career. The material is arranged in two series, and follows Hardwick's original arrangement where possible. The Works series (four boxes, 1956-1991, bulk 1975-1985) represents Hardwick's work as a novelist and literary critic. The Personal series (three boxes, 1934-1989, bulk 1970-89) documents Hardwick's life, activities, friendships, and her relationship with her husband, Robert Lowell.

In conjunction with books and journals donated by Hardwick now housed in the HRC book collections, the materials in the first series offer an almost complete archive of her published works. The typescripts of many unpublished articles, as well as lectures and presentations, can also be found in the collection. Of particular interest are the manuscript drafts of her 1979 novel, *Sleepless Nights*. This book is the most fully documented in the collection, and includes four folders of reviews from around the world.

The material in the second series is made up largely of correspondence, but also includes photographs, interviews, awards and honors given to Hardwick, as well as materials she accumulated following the death of her husband, Robert Lowell. The correspondence to Hardwick is arranged alphabetically in two groupings. The first of these includes general correspondence, and is notable for its inclusion of many significant authors, who were friends of Hardwick's, discussing their works or giving their opinions on recent literature and events. Of particular interest is the collection of letters from Robert Lowell, dating 1949 to 1977, as well as letters from Hardwick's close friend, Mary McCarthy. The series also includes a large number of condolence letters written to Hardwick on the death of Lowell, as well as a small amount of correspondence from Hardwick, and letters from Lowell to his daughter, Harriet.

The collection gives a good overview of Hardwick's writing career. Less well documented, however, are the events of her personal life. The collection lacks information on her activities prior to 1949, and does not include manuscripts of her earliest publications. The collection documents more fully Hardwick's career and life in the 1970s and 1980s.

The collection should be of particular interest to scholars of Robert Lowell, and references to him are found throughout the second series. Many of Hardwick's correspondents refer to him in their letters, and his frequent letters to Hardwick illuminate his life and writing career. The group of condolence letters Hardwick received upon his death contain personal reminiscences from a number of distinguished authors,

such as Stephen Spender, Lillian Hellman, and Adrienne Rich. Further, two folders of notes and correspondence relating to the publication of two books about Lowell, by Ian Hamilton and C. David Heymann, contain biographical information contributed by Elizabeth Hardwick, as well as her disagreements with passages in the works.

Series I: Works, 1956-1991, bulk 1975-1985 (boxes 1-4)

The first series divides Hardwick's works into two subseries--the first is arranged alphabetically by title regardless of genre, and consists of novels, essays, short stories, and critical reviews. The second follows Hardwick's original grouping under the title "Uncollected essays, written after the publication of *Bartleby in Manhattan*." However, some works found in the first alphabetical arrangement are also uncollected and were written after the publication of the book. (An index to the works is provided in this finding aid). A third subseries contains newspaper and journal reviews of Hardwick's works.

The material in this series includes handwritten notes, typed and carbon copy manuscripts, published articles, proof copies, and reviews of articles and books published by Hardwick. The creation and publication of two of Hardwick's books, *Bartleby in Manhattan* (1986) and *Sleepless Nights* (1979), are well documented, and include typewritten drafts, layouts, and galley proofs. The range of topics covered in essay form illustrates Hardwick's interest in literature and social issues. Over half of the essays in the series address literary topics, with an emphasis on modern writers and book reviews. Of particular interest are the writings devoted to women writers, such as Mary McCarthy, Doris Lessing, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, Katherine Anne Porter, and Simone Weil. The essays covering social issues include such subjects as popular religious figures, Communism, Martin Luther King, Lee Harvey Oswald, contemporary mores, and aging. Also included in this series are theater reviews, short stories, addresses, and presentations. Most of the essays are in typewritten form, with handwritten emendations. A significant number of the works are also represented by galley proofs. A number of essays have been grouped under the title *Bartleby in Manhattan*. However, earlier versions of some of these essays can also be found in the first subseries.

This series spans five decades, but the vast majority of materials appear to date from the 1970s and 1980s. This is especially true of manuscripts, since the earlier works are exclusively published articles.

Series II. Personal, 1934-1989, bulk 1970-1989 (boxes 5-7)

The material in this series has been divided into three subseries, the largest of which is the first, Correspondence, 1949-1989, bulk 1970-1984. This subseries has been further divided into four groupings, which follow Hardwick's arrangement--general letters to Hardwick, letters from Hardwick, letters from Robert Lowell to other family members, and condolence letters written to Hardwick upon the death of Lowell. Each grouping is in alphabetical order, and Hardwick's original listing of the correspondents can be found in the folders. Hardwick's incoming correspondence ranges from intimate letters from close friends, such as Mary McCarthy, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Craft, Angela Carter, Nadine Gordimer, Stephen and Natasha Spender, and Gore Vidal, to single letters from acquaintances and colleagues. The group of letters written to Hardwick upon the death of Robert Lowell is notable because many correspondents offer personal reminiscences of

Lowell.

The correspondence is largely literary in nature, and interesting because many friends of Hardwick, who are writers themselves, offer opinions on Hardwick's writing as well as their own and that of other writers. Other correspondents discuss important social issues. Mary McCarthy's letters are particularly insightful. Of particular interest to scholars of Robert Lowell are the many letters discussing his activities and mental state.

Within the correspondence of this subseries are found four folders of letters from Robert Lowell to Hardwick written between 1949 and 1977. Especially well documented are Lowell's final years, when he wrote regularly to Hardwick and their daughter, Harriet. It should be noted that Hardwick's chronological arrangement of these letters has been maintained, and that undated correspondence can be found at the back of each folder.

The Activities subseries spans the years 1934-1989, but most of the material falls between 1979 and 1989. It includes honors and awards Hardwick received as well as articles about her. Of particular interest is the folder of photographs, which contains pictures of Hardwick, as well as three that had belonged to Robert Lowell, with notations on the backs.

The final subseries, titled Robert Lowell, 1976-1987, contains materials that Hardwick collected about Lowell after his death. Included are memorials to the poet, written by Frank Bidart and Blair Clark. The two folders of material devoted to the posthumous biographies of Lowell offer Hardwick's insight into Lowell's life, as well as her disagreements with the biographers' work.

2002 Acquisition

This accretion includes Hardwick's writings and correspondence, as well as articles about her, awards, biographical information, and reviews. While the bulk of the material is recent (1990-2000), her writings date from 1959. The papers are organized in three series: Series I. Works, 1959-2000, Series II. Correspondence, 1970-2001, and Series III. Career-related Material.

Series I. Works, 1959-2000, contains material for several books, as well as articles, book reviews, conference papers and lectures, introductions, short stories, and tributes. Material for her books includes typescripts and proofs for the introduction to *American Fictions* (1999), *Sight-Readings* (1998), and *Herman Melville* (2000). Also present is a privately printed collection of short stories, *New York Stories* (1996).

Hardwick's articles appeared in a variety of publications such as *Granta*, *Harper's*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Opera News*, *Three Penny Review*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*, on topics including Anton Chekhov, Faye Dunaway, Henrik Ibsen, Henry James, Herman Melville's "Billy Budd," Katherine Anne Porter, O. J. Simpson, and Gertrude Stein, as well as places such as Selma, Alabama; Lexington, Kentucky; Maine, and New York City.

Hardwick's book reviews for *The New Republic*, *New York Review*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *The New Yorker* cover a wide range of subjects including the Menendez brothers, Edmund Wilson, the racehorse "Seabiscuit," poet Delmore Schwartz, editor Willie Morris, Henry James, and Thomas Wolfe, as well as authors Richard Ford, Nigel Hamilton, and Philip Roth.

Introductions to books include Machado de Assis's *Dom Casmurro*, Henry James's *Daisy Miller*, Mary McCarthy's *Intellectual Memoirs*, Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and *Redburn*, V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, Susan Sontag's *Reader*, and Italo Svevo's *Zeno's Conscience*.

Hardwick's friendships and professional associations are reflected in her tributes, requested for a variety of publications and occasions, for individuals such as Harvard's Bill Alfred, author William Gaddis, journalist Murray Kempton, writer/philosopher Jonathan Lieberson, J. F. Powers, and Peter Taylor.

The correspondence in Series II includes letters (1970-2001) from Hardwick's Boston friend Esther Brooks; Robert Lowell's aunt, Sarah Winslow Cotting; and Robert Lowell's first cousin, Alice Meade, and her daughter Devie. The general correspondence includes letters from Louis Begley, Richard Ford, Nadine Gordimer, Aidan Higgins, John Gregory Dunne, Carolyn Kizer, David Laskin, Alison Lurie, Janet Malcolm, W. S. Merwin, Larry McMurtry, Cynthia Ozick, Robert Stone, Peter Taylor, and John Updike.

Series III. Career-related Material provides additional information about Hardwick including articles and biographical information; awards and honors; photographs of Hardwick, Robert Lowell, and others; and reviews of *Sleepless Nights*.

Separated Material

Books that arrived with the Elizabeth Hardwick Papers were transferred to the Ransom Center Library and are described in the University of Texas library catalog. Awards were transferred to the Center's Personal Effects Collection. One VHS tape was transferred to the Center's Moving Image Collection.

Note to Researchers

The inventory for the Elizabeth Hardwick Papers is a conflation of one finding aid created in 1993 and a preliminary inventory created for a minimally processed addition received in 2002. The 2002 addition was appended to the end of the original finding aid. Because both descriptions began the box numbering with Box 1, the 2002 addition is differentiated by adding the letter "a" to the original box number (e.g., Box 1a, Box 2a, etc.). The inventories were combined in 2025 to comply with a new content management system.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Anzilotti, Rolando.
Bidart, Frank, 1939- .
Bishop, Elizabeth, 1911-1979.
Boyers, Robert.
Brinnin, John Malcolm, 1916- .
Eberhart, Helen Elizabeth.
Epstein, Jacob.
Fremont-Smith, Eliot, 1929- .
Giroux, Robert.
Goldberg, Lynn.
Gray, Francine du Plessix.
Howard, Richard, 1929- .
Howe, Irving.
Kazin, Alfred, 1915- .
Lowell, Robert, 1917-1977.
McCarthy, Mary, 1912- .
McPherson, William.
Merwin, W. S. (William Stanley), 1927- .
Oates, Joyce Carol.
Orwell, Sonia.
Ostroff, Anthony, 1923- .
Phillips, Robert S.
Rich, Adrienne Cecil.
Richards, I. A. (Ivor Armstrong), 1893- .
Roth, Philip.
Schlesinger, Arthur Meier, 1917- .
Spender, Natasha Litvin.
Spender, Stephen, 1909- .
Stern, Richard G., 1928- .
Updike, John.
Valentine, Jean.
Vidal, Gore, 1925- .

Subjects

American fiction--20th century.

American fiction--Women writers.

Literature--History and criticism.

Document Types

Awards.

Biographies.

Book reviews.

Eulogies.

Galley proofs.

Photographs.

Postcards.

Scripts.

Speeches.

Series I: Works, 1956-1991, bulk 1975-1985

Subseries A: General works, 1956-1987, bulk 1979-1987

A-B **box 1 folder 1**

Bartleby in Manhattan

Collected Essays **box 1 folder 2-3**

Duplicated page proofs **folder 4**

Repro proofs **folder 5**

C-E **box 2 folder 1**

F-I **folder 2**

J-S **folder 3**

Sleepless Nights

Early drafts **box 2 folder 4**

Draft **folder 5**

Draft **box 3 folder 1**

Carbon copy draft **folder 2**

Repro proofs **folder 3**

Layout and bluelines **folder 4**

T-Z **folder 5**

Subseries B: Uncollected essays, written after the publication of *Bartleby in Manhattan*, 1979-1991

Women writers **box 3 folder 6**

Other substantial articles on American and foreign writers **folder 7**

Commencement Day Address, Smith College, 1984 **box 4
folder 1**

Addresses and presentations **folder 2**

Subseries C: Reviews, 1962-1984

General

Sleepless Nights

January - May, 1979

box 4 folder 4

June - August, 1979

folder 5

September 1979 - October 1983

folder 6

Undated & Swedish

folder 7

Series II. Personal, 1934-1989, bulk 1970-1989

Subseries A: Correspondence, 1949-1989

Incoming correspondence

A-F	box 5 folder 1
G-L	folder 2
Robert Lowell	
1949-1961	box 5 folder 3
1963-1969	folder 4
1970	folder 5
1971-77	folder 6
Mary McCarthy	folder 7
M-R	box 6 folder 1
S-Z	folder 2
Outgoing correspondence	folder 3
Letters from Robert Lowell to Charlotte Winslow Lowell & Harriet Lowell	folder 4
Letters received by Elizabeth Hardwick on the death of Robert Lowell	
A-F	box 6 folder 5
G-M	folder 6
N-S	folder 7
T-Z	box 7 folder 1
Telegrams	folder 2

Subseries B: Activities, 1934-1989, bulk 1979-1989

Awards & Honors	box 7 folder 3
Interviews & Articles	folder 4

Photographs

folder 5

Subseries C: Robert Lowell, 1976-1987

Written memorials to Lowell

box 7 folder 6

Correspondence and notes on biography of Lowell by Ian Hamilton

folder 7

Correspondence and note on biography of Lowell by C. David Heymann

folder 8

Addition (Reg. no. 15001), 2002

I. Works, 1959-2000

<i>American Fictions</i> , introduction	Box 1a Folder 1
Articles by Hardwick	Folder 2-3
Book reviews	Folder 4-6
Conference papers and lectures	Folder 7
<i>Herman Melville</i>	
Corrected typescript	Box 1a Folder 8
Uncorrected proofs, book blurb, correspondence, and reviews	Box 2a Folder 1-2
Introductions by Hardwick	Folder 3
Short stories including <i>New York Stories</i>	Folder 4-5
<i>Sight-Readings</i> , publisher's edited copy, and reviews	Folder 6-7
Tributes	Folder 8

II. Correspondence, 1970-2001

General	Box 3a Folder 1
Brooks, Esther	Folder 2
Cotting, Sarah Winslow	Folder 3
Meade, Alice and Devie	Folder 4

III. Career-related Material

Articles about Hardwick	Box 3a Folder 5
Awards, biographical information, and honors	Folder 6

Photographs of Hardwick, Robert Lowell, and others

Folder 7

Reviews of *Sleepless Nights*

Folder 8

Elizabeth Hardwick Papers--Index of Correspondents

The following index does not include the 2002 addition.

- Adams, Alice--5.1
- Adler, Renata (The New Yorker)--6.5
- Alfred, William--7.2
- Alvarez, A. (Alfred)--6.5
- Ammons, Archie (A.R.)--5.1
- Anderson, William Grenville Harvard College--6.5
- Anzilotti, Gloria Italiano--7.2
- Anzilotti, Rolando--6.5,7.2
- Ashbery, John--6.5
- Atlas, James (New York Times Book Review)--7.8
- Austin, Sally--6.5
- Axelrod, Stephen Gould--6.5
- Barnes, Julian--5.1
- Bengis, Ingrid--6.5
- Berberova, Nina Nikolaevna--2.3
- Berlin, Isaiah--6.5
- Berryman, John--5.1
- Bidart, Frank--7.6,7.8
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- Boyers, Roberts--5.1
- Boyle, Kay--5.1
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- Brustein, Robert Sanford--6.5
- Cameron, Hamish C.--6.5
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- Carlisle, Olga Andreyev--5.1
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- Carter, Elliott--6.5
- Carter, Helen--6.5
- Chace, James--6.5
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- Clark, Blair--5.1
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- Cori, Carl--6.5
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- Craft, Robert--5.1
- Crichton, Judy--6.5
- Curtis, John (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)--4.4
- Dickey, James--7.2
- Dunne, Joan Didion--6.5
- Dupee, Andy--7.2

- Dupee, Frederick (F.W.)--7.2
- Eberhart, Betty--6.5,7.2
- Eberhart, Richard--7.2
- Eissler, K.R. (Kurt Robert)--6.5
- Ehrenpreis, Irvin--5.1
- Engel, Monroe--5.1
- Epstein, Jacob (Random House, Inc.)--4.4,6.5
- Faber & Faber, London--7.2
- Fiction Department (The New Yorker)--1.1,2.2
- Fitz-Gerald, Clark B.--6.5
- Fitzgerald, Sally--6.5
- Flint, Robert W.--2.2,5.1
- Fremont-Smith, Eliot (Village Voice)--7.8
- Giroux, Robert--(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.)--7.8
- Goldberg, Lynn (Random House, Inc.)--4.4
- Gordimer, Nadine--5.2
- Gordon, Mary--5.2
- Gowrie, Mrs. Grey (Bingo)--6.6
- Goyen, William--6.6
- Gray, Cleve--7.2
- Gray, Francine du Plessix--5.2,6.6,7.2
- Gray, Hanna Holborn (Yale University)--6.6
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- James, Holly--6.6
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- McCarthy, Mary--4.3,5.7
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- Mazzocco, John--6.6
- Meade, Mrs. Alia Winslow--6.6
- Meredith, Bill--6.6
- Merrill, James--6.6
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- Moss, Howard (The New Yorker)--6.6
- Mostyn-Owen, Gaia Servadio--6.1
- Mumford, Lewis--6.1
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- Prichett, V.S.--6.7
- Pyle, John W.--6.7
- Quindlen, Anna--6.7
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- Reeve, Frank--6.7
- Rich, Adrienne--6.1,6.7
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- Savage, Rowena (Weidenfeld (Publishers) Inc.)--4.3
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- Schlesinger, Arthur M.--6.2,6.7
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- Sedgewick, Sally--6.7
- Seidel, Frederick--6.2
- Sharaf, James A. (Harvard University)--7.8
- Silvers, Robert B. (New York Review of Books)--2.3
- Simpson, Eileen B.--6.7
- Smith, William Jay--6.7
- Solomon, Barbara--6.7
- Sontag, Susan--6.2
- Spender, Natasha--6.2,6.7
- Spender, Stephen--6.2,6.7,7.7
- Stafford, Jean--7.8
- Starr, Mrs. Milton--6.7
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- Stern, Dick--6.2,6.7
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- Strong, Amy--6.7
- Strong, Herbert--6.7
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Elizabeth Hardwick Papers--Index of Works

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- American Fictions--1.1
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- Contemporary Women Fiction Writers--4.2
- [The Cost of Living]--2.1
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- [Henry James]--2.2
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- John Updike--3.7
- Katherine Anne Porter--3.6
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- Nadine Gordimer--3.6
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- [Notes for talk to graduate students in English Department at Columbia University]--4.2
- Notes: Literature, Tradition, and Values--4.2
- The Oswald Family--1.2
- Presentation of the MacDowell Medal to Mary McCarthy--4.2
- Presentation to Peter Taylor of the Gold Medal for the Short Story--4.2
- Reading--2.3
- Reflections on Simone Weil--2.3
- [Review of Tolstoy Remembered, Ada, Countess of Blessington, and A Captive Time of Year: My Years with Pasternak]--2.3
- Ring Lardner--1.2
- Robert Frost in His Letters--1.2
- Ruth Benedict: A Biographical Essay for Television--2.3
- Sex and the Single Man--1.2
- Simone Wei--1.3, 2.3
- Sleepless Nights--2.4-3.4
- Sue and Arabella--1.3
- Tennessee Williams World of Women--3.5
- The Theater of Grotowski--1.2
- Thomas Mann at 100--1.3
- Thoughts about Kirsten Thorup's Baby--3.5
- Timon of Paris--1.2, 3.5
- [Unpublished review of Henry Adams by R.P. Blackmur]--3.5
- Wives and Mistresses--1.3