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# Guide to the Stephen Yenser Papers Relating to James Merrill

YCAL MSS 581



by Andrea Benefiel and Jennifer Meehan

2012

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 581

**CREATOR:** Yenser, Stephen

**TITLE:** Stephen Yenser papers relating to James Merrill

**DATES:** 1967-2001

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3.33 linear feet (8 boxes) + 1 art

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** This collection consists of material created and accumulated by Stephen Yenser in the course of researching and editing the literary work of James Merrill. Material primarily includes correspondence between Yenser and Merrill spanning 1967 to 1995 and various drafts of Merrill's writings.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.yenser>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.yenser>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Stephen Yenser on the Eugene G. O'Neill Memorial Fund, 2002.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Stephen Yenser Papers Relating to James Merrill is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Stephen Yenser Papers Relating to James Merrill. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Formerly classed as Uncat MSS 264.

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## Stephen Yenser

Stephen Yenser is an American poet and critic. He is the Distinguished Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition to publishing several books of poetry, Yenser authored *The Consuming Myth: The Work of James Merrill* (1987). Yenser has also co-edited a number of Merrill's works, including *Collected Poems* (2001), *Collected Novels and Plays* (2002), *Collected Prose* (2004), *The Changing Light at Sandover* (2006), and *Selected Poems* (2008).

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of material created and accumulated by Stephen Yenser in the course of researching and editing the literary work of James Merrill. Material primarily includes correspondence between Yenser and Merrill spanning 1967 to 1995 and various drafts of Merrill's writings.

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## Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Correspondence, 1967-1991. II. Writings and Other Papers, 1970-2001.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1967-1991

0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)

Series I. contains letters between Stephen Yenser and James Merrill and letters to Yenser from Peter Hooten.

	Merrill, James	
b. 1, f. 1-2	1967-1971 1967-1971	1967-1971 1967-1971
b. 1, f. 3-5	1972-1973 1972-1973 <a href="#">Merrill, James, 1972-1973 1972-1973</a>	1972-1973 1972-1973
b. 1, f. 6-9	1974-1978 1974-1978 <a href="#">Merrill, James, 1974-1978 1974-1978</a>	1974-1978 1974-1978
b. 2, f. 10-11	1979-1981 1979-1981	1979-1981 1979-1981
b. 2, f. 12-13	1982-1984 1982-1984	1982-1984 1982-1984
b. 2, f. 14-15	1985-1986 1985-1986	1985-1986 1985-1986
b. 2, f. 16-19	1987-1995 1987-1995	1987-1995 1987-1995
b. 2, f. 20	Hooten, Peter	1985-1991

**Series II: Writings and Other Papers, 1970-2001***2.5 linear feet (6 boxes) + 1 art*

Writings by James Merrill contain mostly typescript drafts of Merrill's writings, many containing manuscript corrections and notes. Also included are proofs, notebooks, and correspondence related to Merrill's works. Writings of Others include the libretto of *Phaedra: An Opera in Two Acts*, by Bernard de Zogheb, which contains a foreword written by Merrill; as well as photocopies of a poetic tribute to James Merrill, written by Rachel Hadas. Other Papers include a photograph of Merrill and a plate engraved with a swan.

Organized into three subseries: Writings by James Merrill, Writings of Others, and Other Papers. Writings by James Merrill are arranged alphabetically by title, with untitled writings filed at the end of the subseries. Writings of Others are arranged alphabetically by author.

## Writings by James Merrill

b. 3, f. 21	<i>The Bait</i> , typescript (photocopy), with letter to Yenser from Washington University Library dated 2001	2001, undated
b. 3, f. 22	"The Birthday," typescript (photocopy) and manuscript notes	undated
<i>Braving the Elements</i>		
b. 3, f. 23	Drafts of poems from the book, newspaper clipping, typescript, and typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1972
b. 3, f. 24	Proofs (photocopy)	circa 1972
b. 3, f. 25	<i>Coda: The Higher Keys</i> , drafts, typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1982
<i>A Different Person</i>		
b. 3, f. 26	<a href="#">Yanina Notebook #1</a>	circa 1993
b. 3, f. 27-30	Drafts, typescript, with corrections	circa 1993
b. 4, f. 31-33	Typescript pages	circa 1993
b. 4, f. 34-35	Typescript, bound in two volumes	circa 1993
b. 5, f. 36-40	<a href="#">Divine Comedies, drafts of poems, including The Book of Ephraim, autograph manuscript, typescript, and typescript (photocopy), with corrections</a>	1975
b. 5, f. 41	<i>The Fire Season</i> , drafts of poems from the book, typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1970
b. 5, f. 42	<i>The Image Maker</i> , draft, typescript and typescript (photocopy), with corrections	1985
b. 5, f. 43-44	<i>The Inner Room</i> , drafts, typescript and typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1988
b. 6, f. 45-48	<i>Last Poems</i> , correspondence, corrected typescript and typescript (photocopy) drafts, proofs, and printed prospectus	1997
b. 6, f. 49-50	<i>The Late Settings</i> , drafts, typescript and typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1985

## Writings by James Merrill (continued)

b. 6, f. 51-52	<i>Mirabell's Books of Number</i> , drafts, typescript and typescript (photocopy), with corrections and notes	circa 1978
b. 7, f. 53	"Rose," typescript (photocopy), 1949?	undated
<i>A Scattering of Salts</i>		
b. 7, f. 54-55	Drafts, typescript and typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1995
b. 7, f. 56	Draft, typescript	circa 1995
b. 7, f. 57-58	Advance uncorrected proof	1995
b. 7, f. 59-60	<i>Scripts for the Pageant</i> , drafts, typescript and typescript (photocopy), with corrections	circa 1980
b. 8, f. 61-62	<i>Voices from Sandover</i> , shooting script, typescript (photocopy), with corrections	1990
b. 8, f. 63	<a href="#">"Yánnina, for Stephen Yenser," typescript drafts, with corrections</a>	1972
b. 8, f. 64	<i>The Yellow Pages</i> , typescript	circa 1974
b. 8, f. 65	Ouija Board Session, manuscript and typescript	1976 March 29
b. 8, f. 66	<a href="#">Ouija Board Session, manuscript</a>	1977 May 22
b. 8, f. 67	Greek child's notebook, containing short verse by Merrill	1971
Writings of Others		
b. 8, f. 68	de Zogheb, Bernard. <i>Phaedra: an opera in two acts</i> , libretto, with forward by James Merrill	undated
b. 8, f. 69	Hadas, Rachel. "Six Poems for James Merrill," printed version (photocopy)	undated
Other Papers		
b. 8, f. 70	<a href="#">Photograph of James Merrill by Tom Victor, inscribed to Stephen Yenser by Merrill</a>	1971
b. 8, f. 71	Plate with engraving of swan	undated
b. 9 (Art)	[Wooden stick with a metal point that has a decorative metal casing, with the other end wrapped in rope]	undated

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

American literature -- 20th Century  
American poetry -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century  
Poets, American -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Merrill, James, 1926-1995  
Yenser, Stephen

### **Contributors**

Yenser, Stephen  
Merrill, James, 1926-1995