

# Guide to the Jonathan Lethem Papers

YCAL MSS 1131



by Rosemary K. J. Davis

June 2018

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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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 1131

**CREATOR:** Lethem, Jonathan

**TITLE:** Jonathan Lethem papers

**DATES:** 1938–2016

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 33.33 linear feet (74 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Jonathan Lethem Papers, which span from 1938 to 2016, contain writings in the form of drafts, galley proofs, research, notes related to his novels, short stories, and non-fiction including his most well-known works, *Motherless Brooklyn* and *Fortress of Solitude*. The papers also contain correspondence, clippings, ephemera, audiovisual materials, and electronic media related to Lethem's life and work.

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

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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.lethem>.

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  
    item barcode

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, Inc. on the Sinclair Lewis Fund, 2016.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Boxes 71, 73 (born digital): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 72 (microcassettes): Restricted fragile material. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 74: Restricted until 2027. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Jonathan Lethem Papers 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

Jonathan Lethem Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Jonathan Lethem

Jonathan Lethem (1964-) is an American novelist and essayist born in Brooklyn, New York. Lethem attended Bennington College in Vermont, worked as a book store clerk in California, and has written over ten novels and short story collections, in addition to numerous essays. His most well-known works are *Motherless Brooklyn* and *Fortress of Solitude*. Lethem received the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction in 1999 and a MacArthur Fellowship in 2005.

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## Scope and Contents

The Jonathan Lethem Papers, which span from 1938 to 2016, contain writings including novels, short stories, and non-fiction. His most well-known works are *Motherless Brooklyn* and *Fortress of Solitude*. The papers also contain correspondence, clippings, ephemera, audiovisual materials, and electronic media related to Lethem's life and work.

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## Arrangement

Organized into five series: I. Writings, 1938-2013. II. Writings by Others, 2000-2009. III. Personal Papers, 1957-2016. IV. Business Papers, 1964-2015. V. Restricted Papers.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Writings, bulk 1968–2013

14.17 linear feet (32 boxes)

Contains materials related to Jonathan Lethem's writings including drafts, galley proofs, research, notes, and other documentation related to the writing process.

Materials within this series are organized chronologically with some undated materials placed at the end.

b. 1	Early writings (2 folders)	circa 1970s-1990s
b. 1	Comics and drawings (2 folders)	circa 1980s
b. 2	Philip K. Dick Society newsletters, writings, research, and documentation (4 folders)	circa 1968-2011
b. 3	<a href="#">Apes in the Plan</a> (2 folders)	circa 1980s
b. 3	Gun, with Occasional Music (3 folders)	circa 1980s-1994
b. 4	Gun with Occasional Music/White Lines	circa 1990s
b. 4	Amnesia Moon/Fractal Days, notes, and unidentified writings (2 folders)	circa 1990s
b. 5	Amnesia Moon/Fractal Days (2 folders)	circa 1990s
b. 5	Wall of the Sky, Wall of the Eye	1996
b. 6	As She Climbed Across the Table/Satisfying Lack (3 folders)	circa 1990s
b. 7	Satisfying Lack (2 folders)	undated
b. 7	<a href="#">Girl in Landscape</a> (3 folders)	circa 1990s
b. 8	Motherless Brooklyn/Jerks From Nowhere drafts and notes (3 folders)	circa 1995-1999
b. 9	This Shape We're In (2 folders)	circa 1995-2000
b. 9	Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	circa 2003
b. 10	Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	undated
b. 11	Fortress of Solitude (3 folders)	undated

b. 12	Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	circa 2003
b. 13	Fortress of Solitude annotated book text and screenplay notes (3 folders)	undated
b. 14	Fortress of Solitude (3 folders)	undated
b. 15	Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	circa 2003
b. 16	Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	circa 2003
b. 16	Fortress of Solitude research	circa 1979-2001
b. 17	Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	circa 2003
b. 18	Fortress of Solitude (4 folders)	circa 2003
b. 19	Fortress of Solitude	circa 2003
b. 19	Men and Cartoons (3 folders)	circa 2004
b. 20	Men and Cartoons (3 folders)	circa 2004
b. 20	Believeniks!	2005
b. 20	The Disappointment Artist	2004
b. 21	The Disappointment Artist (5 folders)	circa 1980s-2005
b. 22	How We Got Insipid	undated
b. 22	You Don't Love Me Yet (4 folders)	circa 2006
b. 23	Chronic City (3 folders)	circa 2009
b. 24	Chronic City (2 folders)	circa 2009
b. 25	Chronic City	circa 2009
b. 25	Lucky Alan (4 folders)	2013-2014
b. 26	Dissident Gardens research	circa 1970s-2013
b. 26	Dissident Gardens (3 folders)	2009-2013

b. 27	Dissident Gardens (5 folders)	2010–2012
b. 28	Dissident Gardens (3 folders)	2008–2010
b. 28	Short stories and Stonecoast Writers' Conference programs	undated, 2000-2001
b. 29	Short stories (4 folders)	undated
b. 30	Short stories (5 folders)	undated
b. 31	Short stories (2 folders)	undated



**Series II: Writings by others, 2000–2009***2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)*

Contains writings by Philip K. Dick with annotations by Lethem, whose own work was strongly influenced by Dick's writing. Also contains writings by other authors including Don DeLillo and Thomas Berger.

Materials within this series maintain the original physical organization found at time of acquisition.

b. 32	Acts of Faith by Thomas Berger (2 folders)	2009
b. 32	Fridays at Enrico's by Don Carpenter	undated
b. 32	The Body Artist by Don DeLillo	circa 2001
b. 33	The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch by Philip K. Dick	2006
b. 33	Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick	2006
b. 33	Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said by Philip K. Dick	2007
b. 33	Unidentified writings by Philip K. Dick (2 folders)	undated
b. 34	The Divine Invasion by Philip K. Dick	2008
b. 34	Dr. Bloodmoney or How We Got Along After the Bomb by Philip K. Dick	2007
b. 34	The Man in the High Castle	2006
b. 34	The Transmigration of Timothy Archer by Philip K. Dick	2008
b. 35	A Maze of Death by Philip K. Dick	2008
b. 35	A Scanner Darkly by Philip K. Dick	2007
b. 35	A Scanner Darkly screenplay by Richard Linklater	2004
b. 35	Chronology Note on the Texts Notes by Philip K. Dick	2007
b. 35	Ubik by Philip K. Dick	2006
b. 36	Unidentified writings by Philip K. Dick (2 folders)	undated
b. 36	Now Wait For Last Year by Philip K. Dick	2007
b. 36	Martian Time-Slip by Philip K. Dick	2007
b. 37	The Ode to Stalin by Leeore Schnairsohn	circa 2007
b. 37	Writings by multiple authors (2 folders) Contains writings by multiple authors including a script for "The Wire" by David Simon, a draft of "Ubik" by Philip K. Dick, poems by Thurston Moore, and a version of "Skimpy Faithy" by Miranda July.	2000

**Series III: Personal papers, 1938–2016***5.75 linear feet (11 boxes)*

Contains materials related to Jonathan Lethem's life and work including extensive correspondence, ephemera, clippings, as well as several drawings of vomiting cats created by Lethem and friends.

Box 72 (audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Materials within this series maintain the original physical organization found at time of acquisition with the exception of some oversized materials.


b. 38	Address books (2 folders)	undated
b. 38	<a href="#">Correspondence and ephemera</a> (2 folders)	circa 1979-1999
b. 38	Correspondence between Jonathan Lethem and Thomas Berger	1989-2008
b. 39	Correspondence, paperwork, and ephemera (3 folders)	1984-2004
b. 39	Correspondence and ephemera from Susan Goldman	2000-2001
b. 40	Correspondence with family	circa 1983-2006
b. 40	Correspondence and papers related to Richard Lethem (2 folders)	1981-2011
b. 40	Correspondence and papers from Judith Frank	circa 1957-1988
b. 41	<a href="#">Correspondence and ephemera from Donna Tartt</a>	1982-1984
b. 41	<a href="#">Correspondence and papers related to Bennington College</a>	circa 1982-2000
b. 41	Correspondence	circa 1993-2000
b. 41	<a href="#">Correspondence with other writers</a> (2 folders)	circa 1993-2015
b. 41	Correspondence with Margaret Atwood	2013-2015
b. 41	Correspondence, notes, and papers related to Bob Dylan interview	2007
b. 42	Correspondence, clippings, writings, and ephemera (22 folders)  Contains correspondence, clippings, writings, and ephemera from individuals including Paul Auster, Thomas Berger, Geoff Dyer, Chris Offutt, Philip Roth, Sylvie Selig, and Alexander Theroux.	circa 2009
b. 43	Correspondence (3 folders)	circa 1983-2000
b. 43	Fan letters (2 folders)	circa 1994-2015

b. 44	Correspondence, clippings, writings, and ephemera (5 folders) Contains correspondence, clippings, writings, and ephemera from individuals including Luke Jaeger, David Bowman, and Madi Horstman.	circa 1984-2013
b. 44	Frequent flier miles and DMV paperwork	circa 2000-2003
b. 45	Health and real estate paperwork (2 folders)	circa 1997-2003
b. 45	<a href="#">Photographs of Jonathan Lethem</a>	undated
b. 45	Correspondence (2 folders) Contains correspondence and writings from individuals including Rick Kronfield and Joel Simon.	circa 1983-2003
b. 45	Promotional materials (2 folders)	circa 1998-2010
b. 46	Book and press tour documentation (2 folders)	circa 2000
b. 46	Fan letters	circa 2000-2010
b. 46	Correspondence and paperwork Contains correspondence, paperwork, and writings related to Jonathan Lethem's publications, events, and teaching.	circa 2007-2009
b. 46	Drawings of vomiting cats	undated
b. 46	"Daylight Noir" photobook and writing	circa 2008
b. 47	Correspondence Contains correspondence with individuals including Lee Ranaldo.	circa 2017-2016
b. 47	Correspondence and writings from scholars	circa 2004-2010
b. 47	Correspondence, paperwork, and writings related to Lethem collaborations with artists	circa 2009-2014
b. 47	David Bowie CD with note	undated
b. 48	Life magazine--Dissident Gardens research	1938
b. 48	Chronic City clipping scrapbook	circa 2007
b. 49	Fortress of Solitude cover mock-up	undated
b. 49	L & L car service t-shirt	undated

Analog audiovisual media

Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

## Analog audiovisual media (continued)


b. 72,   
39002137184959

DYLAN 1 and 2--audio recording of interview between Jonathan Lethem and Bob Dylan circa 2007

*1 Microcassette 01:02:06 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)*

The program is distorted at times. The program begins abruptly. High background noise can be heard.

Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

b. 72,   
39002137184967

DYLAN 3 and 4--audio recording of interview between Jonathan Lethem and Bob Dylan circa 2007

*1 Microcassette 01:03:21 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)*

The program begins and ends abruptly. The program is distorted at times. High background noise can be heard.

Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

**Series IV: Business papers, 1964–2015***8.75 linear feet (21 boxes)*

Contains materials related to Jonathan Lethem's life and work including extensive correspondence, contracts, schedules, event documentation, promotional material, ephemera, clippings, and teaching materials.

Materials within this series maintain the original physical organization found at time of acquisition.

b. 50	Royalty statements and accounting	2014
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to Chronic City	circa 2009-2010
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to Believeniks	circa 2005-2007
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to As She Climbed Across the Table and Girl in the Landscape	circa 2000
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to Amnesia Moon	circa 1997-2007
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to As She Climbed film adaptation	2006
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to Amnesia Moon	1993–2003
b. 50	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to As She Climbed Across the Table	circa 1997-2008
b. 51	Correspondence, notes, and business documentation related to You Don't Love Me Yet	circa 2000-2010
b. 51	Amnesia anthology permissions paperwork	circa 1999-2001
b. 51	Contracts and press for The Wall of the Sky (2 folders)	1995-2000
b. 51	Notes related to Aperture project	2007–2008
b. 51	Correspondence and documentation related to protests of Atlantic Yards development in Brooklyn/DDDB	circa 2006-2008
b. 51	Correspondence and pamphlets related American Academy residency in Berlin	2014
b. 51	Correspondence and notes related to Assises Internationales du Roman events	2008
b. 51	Correspondence and notes related to American Academy residency in Berlin	circa 2010
b. 51	Business and personal correspondence	circa 2005-2009
b. 52	Correspondence, notes, and documentation related to Yaddo residency program	2003–2009
b. 52	Notes and correspondence related to Fence journal submissions	undated
b. 52	Notes and correspondence related to New York Review of Science Fiction	1998
b. 52	Publisher and publication contracts	circa 2004-2014
b. 52	Jonathan Lethem bibliographies	undated

b. 52	Notes and correspondence related Lethem's involvement with Bennington College	1982–2010
b. 52	BMI contract	2008
b. 52	National Book Award and MacArthur award documentation	2005–2008
b. 52	Honors and awards	1992–2013
b. 53	Engagements and itineraries	2002–2013
b. 53	Teaching notes and writings	undated
b. 53	Press and clippings (2 folders)	2003–2004
b. 53	Writings and ephemera	2003–2006
b. 53	Photographs from James Brown's home town	undated
b. 53	Singapore Writers Festival	2014
b. 54	Fortress of Solitude reviews and press clippings (3 folders)	circa 2003–2004
b. 54	Magazines containing Jonathan Lethem's writing	2004–2005
b. 54	The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick selections promo booklet	2011
b. 55	Fortress of Solitude research	circa 1978–2001
b. 55	Fortress of Solitude script, programs, and clippings	2014
b. 55	Bookseller-related correspondence and clippings	1994–2003
b. 55	Programs for readings and events (2 folders)	2006–2010
b. 56	Clippings and articles	2005–2007
b. 56	Event programs and booklets	2005–2010
b. 56	Contracts (2 folders)	circa 1998–2015
b. 57	Clippings, programs, and promotional materials	1964–2014
b. 57	Correspondence and paperwork related to Lethem works in anthologies	2003–2007
b. 57	Contracts for foreign editions	2003–2008
b. 57	Correspondence and contracts for film, charities, and events	2001–2009
b. 57	Correspondence requesting blurbs	2014–2015
b. 57	Always Crashing in the Same Car mash-up	circa 2007
b. 57	Believeniks research	1964
b. 57	Best American Comics notes	undated

b. 57	Correspondence and ephemera related to Brooklyn	2004–2009
b. 57	Correspondence and ephemera related to the Cat Project	2001–2005
b. 57	Book proposal for Fear of Music	circa 2011
b. 57	Notes of congratulation	circa 2003
b. 57	Essays and writing	circa 2004
b. 58	Press and clippings for Girl in Landscape	1996–1998
b. 58	Press, research, and clippings for Motherless Brooklyn	1969–2005
b. 58	Noirs writings	undated
b. 58	Occupy Wall Street writing and notes	undated
b. 58	Omega the Unknown manual and notes	circa 2005-2007
b. 59	Omega the Unknown manual and notes	circa 2005-2007
b. 59	On My Father's Painting notes and drafts	circa 2005
b. 59	Notes and writings related to rock and pop music	undate
b. 59	Speak/Hoyt-Schemerhorn research and clippings	undated
b. 59	Spiderman research	undated
b. 59	They Live notebook and research	circa 2008
b. 59	This Shape We're In royalties, press, and notes	circa 2000-2001
b. 59	World Gone Wrong script and notes	circa 2014
b. 60	Vintage Book of Amnesia contracts and press (2 folders)	1999–2008
b. 60	Library of America correspondence and documentation	2006–2008
b. 60	Rejections and acceptances	circa 1987-1993
b. 60	Correspondence from book editors	1995–1996
b. 60	Correspondence from Bill Thomas	1997–1998
b. 60	Foreign book contracts	circa 1994-2001
b. 60	Correspondence from Michael Kandel	1993–1995
b. 60	Rejections and acceptances from Richard Parks agency	circa 1990-1998
b. 60	Correspondence from WME	2013–2015
b. 60	Correspondence and contracts from Richard Parks agency	circa 1999-2008
b. 61	Correspondence and contracts from Richard Parks agency (3 folders)	circa 2004-2015

b. 62	Correspondence and contracts related to movie rights	circa 1994-2003
b. 62	Correspondence and contracts related to teaching and speaking engagements	circa 2001-2013
b. 62	Correspondence and contracts	2005-2013
b. 62	Contracts with Lyceum Agency	circa 2007-2009
b. 62	Contracts and press for Da Capo Best Music Writing project	2002-2008
b. 62	Press clippings for the Disappointment Artist	2004-2005
b. 63	Contracts and correspondence related to Fortress of Solitude	1999-2008
b. 63	Contracts, press, and correspondence related to Men and Cartoons	2004-2007
b. 63	Contracts, press, and correspondence related to Kafka Americana	1998-2001
b. 63	Contracts, press, and correspondence related to Gun with Occasional Music (2 folders)	1994-2008
b. 63	Contracts, press, and correspondence related to Girl in Landscape	1997-1998
b. 63	Contracts, press, and correspondence related to Fortress of Solitude (2 folders)	2003-2006
b. 64	Early submissions index	circa 1986-1993
b. 64	Itineraries, calendars, and notes	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 64	Correspondence	1976-2000
b. 64	Lists of names	undated
b. 64	Notes on writing	undated
b. 65	Notes, notebooks, and writings (3 folders)	circa 1971-2000s
b. 66	Notes, notebooks, and writings (2 folders)	undated
b. 66	Correspondence from Julia Rosenberg	1999-2000
b. 66	Correspondence, notes, and writings related to interviews with Jonathan Lethem	circa 1994-2013
b. 66	Correspondence, press and contracts	2005-2006
b. 67	Correspondence, paperwork, and ephemera related to writing residencies	2001-2005
b. 67	Correspondence and contracts	2001-2015
b. 67	Poems and notes	undated
b. 67	Book covers	undated
b. 67	Magazine proofs	2001-2003



b. 68	Correspondence, contracts, and writings related to the New Yorker magazine (2 folders)	2002–2009
b. 68	Correspondence and writings related to public speaking engagements	circa 2000s
b. 68	Correspondence	2009–2013
b. 68	Lucky Alan proof	2014
b. 69	Teaching notes, writings, and paperwork (5 folders)	circa 2000s
b. 70	Teaching notes, writings, and paperwork (2 folders) Lethem, Jonathan	circa 2000s

## **Series V: Restricted papers**

Restricted until 2027. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

b. 74

## **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**

Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Authors, American -- 21st century -- Archives

### **Genres / Formats**

Audiocassettes  
Audiovisual materials  
Born digital

### **Occupations**

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century  
Authors -- United States -- 21st century

### **Names**

Lethem, Jonathan