Lily Tuck:

An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Tuck, Lily, 1938-

Title: Lily Tuck Papers

Dates: 1956-2020 (bulk 1991-2015)

Extent: 19 document boxes (7.98 linear feet), 1 oversize box (osb), 1

oversize folder (osf), and 28 electronic files (461 MB)

Abstract: The papers of National Book Award-winning author Lily Tuck

consist of drafts of published and unpublished novels, books, and short stories; notebooks; correspondence; contracts and royalty

statements; and university papers.

Call Number: Manuscript Collection MS-54169

Language: English, French, Italian

Access: Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research

Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival

materials. To request access to electronic files, please email Reference. Original documents containing personal information, such as social security and credit card numbers, are restricted due to privacy concerns during the lifetime of individuals mentioned in the documents. Such documents have been photocopied and replaced

with a redacted copy.

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concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no

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Administrative Information

Preferred Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin. Lily Tuck

Citation: Papers Manuscript Collection MS-54169.

Acquisition: Gift, 2020 (20-02-017-P)

Processed by: Amy E. Armstrong, 2021 Born digital materials processed, arranged,

and described by Brenna Edwards, 2022.

Repository: Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Lily Tuck was born Liliane Alice Solmsen in Paris, France, to German parents, film producer Rodolphe (sometimes spelled Rudolf and known as Rudy) and Irène Solmsen (née Schultze-Jena), on October 10, 1938, just as the Nazi threat in Europe was intensifying. After war was declared in 1939, the family, of Jewish heritage and fearing for their future, left Europe. Her father joined the French Foreign Legion, serving in North Africa, and Liliane and her mother embarking for Peru where they lived for several years, and another year in Uruguay. After World War II, the family reunited in Paris, but Tuck's parents divorced shortly thereafter. In 1947, she and her mother emigrated to the United States and settled in New York City where her mother married Gustav Hermann Kinnicutt in 1948. As a child, Tuck split time between her parents and lived with her father in Italy during summers.

In 1956, Tuck enrolled at Radcliffe College and earned a B.A. in English in 1960. In 1962, she married Ethan "John" Emery, a graduate of Harvard University. Shortly after marrying, the couple moved to Bangkok, Thailand, where they had Josiah, the first of their three children--Dana and Matthew were born after returning to the United States. The couple divorced in 1970, and in 1975, Tuck enrolled at the Sorbonne in Paris and earned a master's degree in American Literature.

Tuck began to write short stories and in the early 1970s also began work on her first novel based on the disappearance of Jim Thompson, a well-known American business man and art collector she knew who went missing from the Cameroon Highlands in Malaysia in the 1960s. She worked on the novel for years and submitted it to numerous publishers between 1975 and 1980, but it was never published.

In the late 1970s, Tuck married attorney Edward H. Tuck, who had three children from his first marriage: Edward, Matthew, and Jessica. The Tucks lived in New York City, where she continued to write and submit stories to magazines including *The New Yorker* and *The Village Voice*. She also translated two French books: *Camille: The Life of Camille Claudel, Rodin's Muse and Mistress* (by Reine-Marie Paris, 1988) and *Zola: Photographer* (by François Émile-Zola and Missen, 1988).

In 1988, Tuck enrolled in a writing workshop with the editor Gordon Lish, who was then working at Alfred A. Knopf and editing *The Quarterly*. Lish became a mentor to Tuck, providing feedback on her writings and overseeing the publication of her first book, at the age of 53, *Interviewing Matisse or the Woman Who Died Standing Up* (1991).

Five years later, Tuck released her second novel, *The Woman Who Walked on Water*, published by Riverhead Books. For her third novel, *Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man* (1999), Tuck drew on her life in Thailand, as the central characters are newlyweds who move to the country at the start of the Vietnam War. It also incorporated reworked parts of her unpublished novel, the disappearance of Jim Thompson. In addition to receiving good reviews, it was nominated for the 2000 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. Tuck's next book was a collection of short stories *Limbo, and Other Places I Have Lived: Stories* (2002).

In 2004, *The News from Paraguay* was published and received much attention after it was shortlisted—and won—the National Book Award. The win surprised some critics and the literary establishment who criticized the selection of the five finalists who all were women who lived in New York City, were relatively unknown, and whose nominated books had modest sales. The works were not the focus of the critiques, but rather the authors themselves, which rallied the nominees who became friends. The win also caught the attention of the Paraguayan government who invited Tuck to visit the country after she stated in her acceptance speech that she had never been to Paraguay. Her visit sparked controversy as some citizens were angered over her portrayal of dictator Francisco Solano Lopez.

Other books by Tuck include *The Double Life of Liliane* (autobiographical novel, 2015), *Heathcliff Redux: A Novella and Stories* (collection, 2020), *The House at Belle Fontaine: Stories* (short story collection, 2013), *I Married You for Happiness* (novel, 2011), *Sisters* (novel, 2017), and *Woman of Rome: A Life of Elsa Morante* (biography, 2008).

In 2002, Liliane Tuck's husband, Edward, died of cancer. In 2018, she recieved and Gugenheim Fellowship. As of 2022, she divides her time between New York City and Maine.

Sources:

In addition to material in the papers, the following sources were used:

Brennan, Carol. "Tuck, Lily." *Newsmakers 2006 Culmination*, Gale 2007, pp.417-418. Gale ebooks. Accessed 15 November 2021.

"Edward H. Tuck, 75, Lawyer." *New York Times*, October 12, 2002. https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/12/nyregion/edward-h-tuck-75-lawyer.html. Accessed 14 December 2021.

"Liliane Solmsen Becomes Bride of Ethan Emery." *New York Times*, November 18, 1962; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, p. 92. Accessed 14 December 2021.

"Mrs. Solmsen Wed to G. H. Kinnicutt." *New York Times*, August 13, 1948; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, p. 18. Accessed 14 December 2021.

Obituary-Kinnicutt. *New York Times*, August 9, 1999; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, p. B7. Accessed 14 December 2021.

"Tuck, Lily." *The Writers Directory*, edited by Jennifer Stock, 36th ed., vol. 5, St. James Press, 2018, p. 3610. Gale ebooks. Accessed 15 November 2021.

Scope and Contents

The papers of National Book Award-winning author Lily Tuck include drafts of published and unpublished novels, books, and short stories; notebooks; correspondence; contracts and royalty statements; and university papers. The papers are arranged into two series: I. Works, circa early 1970s-2020, undated and II. Personal and Professional Material, 1956-2020, undated.

The arrangement of the material reflects Tuck's own organization of her papers, which were stored in labeled manuscript boxes or file folders. Where Tuck provided a meaningful label for a grouping of material or work, that wording was used in the container list and is indicated in single quotation marks.

Series I. Works forms the bulk of the material and consists of 15 document boxes of notes, research material, drafts, proofs, correspondence, and reviews. The works are arranged into two subseries: A. Novels, Non-Fiction, Collections, circa early 1970s-2020, undated and B. Short Works, circa 1983-2020, undated. Short works include essays, short stories, book reviews, book submissions, and similar writings.

Works within each subseries are generally in alphabetical order by title. The exceptions are categories of writing that are better served by grouping them together by genre (e.g. essays). Materials associated with published works may include drafts, research and notes, proofs, correspondence, and reviews. For book-length works, there is often more than one draft; some of which contain edits by Tuck's editors, such as Gordon Lish and Elisabeth Schmitz, or friends, such as novelist Frances Kiernan, as well as copyedits by frequent copyeditor Trent Duffy. Notes written on sticky notes were photocopied and placed in polyester sleeves and put before the original page. Correspondence—often in the form of email printouts—regarding a specific work may be located with the work or in the correspondence segment in Series II. The Index of Correspondents at the end of this finding aid contains box and folder locations for the correspondence in the collection.

Tuck's unpublished first novel about the disappearance of American businessman Jim Thompson in Thailand during the 1960s, called The Lord in the Air, is represented in the papers with a final draft and rejection letters from various publishers.

The News from Paraguay, Tuck's historical novel about the love affair between Paraguayan dictator Francisco Solano Lopez and Ella Lynch, received favorable reviews from critics at the time of publication. Tuck and her novel received even more attention after it was shortlisted—and awarded—the 2004 National Book Award for Fiction. The material in this series relates to the publication and promotion of the novel, before and after the award, with material related to the National Book Award, filed in the Awards section of Series II. Personal and Professional Material. Documents regarding a related visit to Paraguay in 2005 are filed in the 'Paraguay' segment, also in Series II.

Tuck's biography about Italian writer Elsa Morante contains extensive biographical research, including interview transcripts and recordings. The cassette tapes were transferred to the Center's Sound Recordings Collection. Additionally, four compact discs containing digitized research photos were transferred to the Center's Electronic Records Collection.

Subseries B. is organized alphabetically by genre and contains book reviews, published and unpublished short stories, and essays. Many of these drafts are undated. Of particular interest is the essay Tuck wrote for *The Village Voice*, which they decided not to publish, called "Thanksgiving at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp."

Series II. Personal and Professional Material is of relatively small volume and includes documents relating to Tuck's writing career and aspects of her personal life. It is ordered alphabetically by theme or topic.

The Awards segment includes material related to recognition Tuck's writing received, including the National Book Award for *The News from Paraguay* and the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction nomination for *Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man*. This segment includes Tuck's acceptance speech, letters and cards from supporters, articles and reviews about Tuck's nomination and her novel.

A large volume of contracts and royalty statements are present for most of Tuck's published books. The statements from Grove Press and HarperCollins Publishers frequently list royalties for more than one book on each statement.

One document box of correspondence contains letters from Tuck's agents, friends and acquaintances, most of whom are authors. Correspondents include friends and admirers such as Bernardo Bertolucci, Michael Cunningham, Elizabeth Hardwick, Amy Hempel, Michelle Huneven, Margot Livesey, Annie Proulx, Christine Schutt, among others. In these letters, the writers often praise Tuck's books, thank Tuck for her support of their works, and provide details on their writing, and/or events in their lives. There are quite a large number of letters from writer Roger Angell, who also served as fiction editor at The New Yorker for over fifty years. As an editor, his letters provide feedback regarding Tuck's short story submissions to the magazine; as a friend, they offer support, encouragement, and provide a glimpse into their close relationship. There are also numerous letters and notes from writer and editor Gordon Lish, who mentored Tuck, and offered his feedback on her works, particularly Interviewing Matisse or the Woman Who Died Standing Up, which he shepherded into print. Letters from literary agent Alexandra Harding document her efforts to place Tuck's short stories and essays in various magazines and literary journals. The Index of Correspondents at the end of this finding aid contains box and folder locations for the correspondence in the collection.

The folder labeled 'Paraguay' contains correspondence, speeches, travel journals, and excerpts from American and Paraguayan newspapers related to two different trips Tuck took to Paraguay. The first was in 2005 following the announcement of *The News from Paraguay* as the recipient of the National Book Award. In her acceptance speech, Tuck stated she had never been to Paraguay, so she was invited to tour the country by the Paraguayan government. Her novel was criticized by some citizens for its portrayal of Francisco Solano Lopez—who many still consider a national hero—and so her visit made frontpage news.

In the same year, Tuck was invited to Thailand to give the keynote address for the S.E.A. Write Award (Southeast Asian Writers Award). Her invitation was rescinded by the Chairman of the Organizing Committee due to "controversial historical content" and sensitivities surrounding mention of Thai Royalty in her novel *Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man*. The "Thailand" folder contains correspondence documenting this incident, as well as Tuck's response to the censure.

The earliest material present are the papers Tuck wrote for the English and Comparative Literature courses she took while an undergraduate at Radcliffe College between 1956 and 1960. The University segment contains these papers, as well as her notebooks, admission documents, student identification cards, and thesis for her Master's degree at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Between 1988 and 1989, Tuck attended writing workshops taught by Gordon Lish, who would go on to become Tuck's mentor and first editor. This segment contains two notebooks full of notes from Lish's lectures, the introductory notes Lish sent to his students, as well as two class rosters.

The papers are in very good condition. A limited number of thermal faxes were photocopied for preservation purposes.

Separated Material

Non-commercial sound recordings containing interviews were transferred to the Center's Sound Recordings Collection and are cataloged in a separate database.

One VHS tape about Elsa Morante was transferred to the Center's Moving Image Collection and is cataloged in a separate database.

Compact discs containing digitized images were transferred to the Center's Electronic Records Collection.

Index Terms

People

Lish, Gordon.

Morante, Elsa, approximately 1912-1985.

Subjects

Authors, American--20th century.

Women authors--20th century.

Document Types

Correspondence.

Electronic documents.

Manuscripts.

Novels.

Short stories.

Series I. Works, circa early 1970s-2020, undated

Subseries A. Novels, Non-Fiction, Collections, circa early 1970s-2020, undated

Camille: The Life of Camille Claudel, Rodin's Muse and Mistress (by Reine-Marie Paris and translated by Liliane Emery Tuck, 1988). Letter, reviews, 1988 *Withdrawn from uncataloged book

Container

1.1

The Double Life of Liliane (autobiographical novel, 2015)

First draft with chapter synopsis, undated Container 1.2

Draft with edits by Elisabeth Schmitz and letter, October 2014

Container

1.3

Draft 'pre-Trent' Duffy edits, email, January 2015 Container 1.4

Final draft, January 2015 Container 1.5

List of galley proof corrections, 2015 Container 1.6

Rights permissions, photographs used to illustrate novel, review, 2014-2015

Container
1.7

Heathcliff Redux: A Novella and Stories (collection, 2020)

Article about Wuthering Heights, 2018 Container 2.1

Draft of Heathcliff Redux novella, undated Container 2.2

Revised draft of complete manuscript (verso of revised draft contains a previous draft with copyedits dated May 2019 [these copyedits are incorporated into the draft on the front of the page]), email, list of edits, 2019

Rights permissions, reviews, 2018-2020 Container 2.4

The House at Belle Fontaine: Stories (short story collection, 2013)

Draft with edits by Elisabeth Schmitz, undated Container 2.5

Draft with copyedits by Trent Duffy [incorporated?], photograph of house used on book jacket, September 2012

Container
2.6

Letters from readers, 2013 Container 2.7

Publisher catalog, Spring/Summer 2013 Container 2.8

Reviews, 2013 Container 2.9

I Married '	You for	Happiness ((novel.	2011
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Research. Majority is internet articles about probability, mathematics, physics, Container history, places, nature; some emails and notes, 2010

3.1-4

Draft with edits by Elisabeth Schmitz, January 2011 Container 3.5

Second draft, undated Container 3.6

Draft with copyedits, list of corrections, email, April 2011

Container

4.1

Final page proofs with list of corrections, June 2011 Container 4.2

Rights permissions, author photographs, book jacket copy and proofs, publisher catalog (Fall 2012), 2011-2012

4.3

Letters from readers, 2011 Container 4.4

Reviews, flyer for book reading, 2011-2012 Container 4.5

Interviewing Matisse or the Woman Who Died Standing Up (novel, 1991)

Excerpt with edits by Gordon Lish, undated Container 4.6

Letters from readers (some used as book jacket blurbs), invitation to launch party, 1991

4.7

Book jacket proof, 1991 Container 4.8

Reviews, 1991 Container 4.9

Limbo, and Other Places I Have Lived: Stories (short story collection, 2002)

Draft with edits by Robert Jones, undated

Container 4.10,
5.1

Draft with copyedits, May-June 2001 Container 5.2

Permissions and Rights, 2001 Container 5.3

Author questionnaire, letter, 2001, 2003 Container 5.4

Reviews, 2001 Container 5.5

The Lord in the Air (unpublished novel)

Draft [removed from binder notebook], circa early 1970s	Container 5.6
Letters from publishers, 1975-1980	Container 5.7
The News from Paraguay (novel, 2004)	
Research. Library search results; internet articles about Paraguay, historic events, social life and customs, etc., 1999-2003	Container 5.8-9
First draft with edits, undated	Container 6.1-2
Draft with edits by Frances Kiernan, undated	Container 6.3-4
Final draft (June 2003), editorial correspondence, email regarding book j design, June-September 2003	acket Container 6.5, 7.1
'First pass galley proofs (3 November 2003).' Manuscript draft with edits editorial correspondence regarding the galley proofs [not actually present corrections, October 2003-January 2004	Container
Publicity material. Blurbs, National Book Award promotional material, Reading Group Guide, catalog, list of foreign rights holders, press junket itineraries, book readings and appearances, 2003-2005	Container 7.4
Correspondence, 2003-2007	Container 7.5
Correspondence, 2003-2007 Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010	Container
	Container 7.6
Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010 Photocopies, Pati Hill Remembered (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2014-20	Container 7.6 Container 7.7
Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010 Photocopies, Pati Hill Remembered (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2014-20 Final draft, undated Postcards from Marianne (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2018-2020). Draft	Container 7.6 O20?). Container 7.7 Container
Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010 Photocopies, Pati Hill Remembered (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2014-20 Final draft, undated Postcards from Marianne (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2018-2020). Draft email correspondence, 2020	Container 7.6 020?). Container 7.7 Container 8.1
Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010 Photocopies, Pati Hill Remembered (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2014-20 Final draft, undated Postcards from Marianne (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2018-2020). Draft email correspondence, 2020 Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man (novel, 1999) Research. Notes, photocopies of newspapers and books about Jim Thomp	Container 7.6 O20?). Container 7.7 Container 8.1 pson's Container
Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010 Photocopies, Pati Hill Remembered (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2014-20 Final draft, undated Postcards from Marianne (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2018-2020). Draft email correspondence, 2020 Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man (novel, 1999) Research. Notes, photocopies of newspapers and books about Jim Thomp disappearance, Vietnam War, Thailand, translations, etc., 1997, undated	Container 7.6 020?). Container 7.7 Container 8.1 pson's Container 8.2
Articles and Reviews; including for French translation, 2004-2005, 2010 Photocopies, Pati Hill Remembered (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2014-20 Final draft, undated Postcards from Marianne (unpublished non-fiction, circa 2018-2020). Draft email correspondence, 2020 Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man (novel, 1999) Research. Notes, photocopies of newspapers and books about Jim Thomp disappearance, Vietnam War, Thailand, translations, etc., 1997, undated Draft with edits, undated	Container 7.6 020?). Container 7.7 Container 8.1 pson's Container 8.2 Container 8.3-4

Biblioteca Nazionale / 'Photos'. Images of Morante and archival documents, **Container** list of photographs, 2006-2007 9.9

Biblioteca Nazionale / 'Photos'. Images of Morante and archival documents, list of photographs. 10 electronic files: JPG, 2006

Disk-ID-No. 2002017P_004

Chronology, undated Container 10.1

'Diario 1938.' Excerpt, translations, notes, 2005 Container 10.2

'Early stories and translations.' Notes, Italian stories with English translations, 2005

Container
10.3

'Elsa's death.' Email, articles, 2006

Container 10.4

'Elsa's death.' 7 electronic files: JPG, 2006

Disk-ID-No. 2002017P 005-2002017P 006

'Fondo Moravia copies...'. Email, documents and translations, notes, 2006 Container 10.5

'Harry Ransom Center Research.' Emails, copies of documents from the collections, 2006

Container
10.6

'Internet Info.' Internet articles about Italian history, figures, films, etc., 2005-2007 Container

'Maledetta Benedetta and translation - Giulia Riggiero.' Book excerpt,
English translation, 2005

Container
10.8

'Miscellaneous.' Correspondence, notes, articles, etc., 2003-2007

Container
11.1

'Menzogna e Sortilegio.' Email, articles, translations, 2005-2007

Container
11.2

Photographs. 21 electronic files: TIF, 2007

Disk-ID-No. 2002017P 003

'Pro o Contro la Bomba Atomica.' Articles, undated

Container
11.3

'Procida.' Snapshot photographs of the island, undated

Container
11.4

'Rome.' Correspondence, articles, notes, 2005-2007

Container
11.5

'Lo scialle andaluso and Il mondo Salvato dai ragazzini.' Email, articles, book excerpts, notes, interview transcript, 2006

Container

11.6

'Siciliano - Without the Comfort of Religion / Bill Morrow / Allen Midgette.' Program (1961), articles, notes, copies of documents from the Ransom Center, 1961, 2007

Container
11.7

Una signora di mio gusto. Photocopy of publication, undated

Container
11.8

'Silvia Valisa - letters, email.' 2004-2006 Container 11.9

'Storia.' Articles, book excerpts, translations, email, copies of documents from the Ransom Center, notes, 2004-2006 Container

'Tapes.' Interview transcripts, notes, 2005-2007 *Recorded interview cassette tapes separated to Sound Recordings Collection	Container 12.1
'TK TK TK Rome chapter.' Notes, articles, undated	Container 12.2
Italian magazines, 2004-2005	Container 12.3
Notebooks. Seven notebooks, 2006, undated	Container 12.4-5
Draft with edits by Frances Kiernan and additional edits and corresponden from Molly Haskell, Michelle Huneven, Paul Elie, May 2007	ce Container 12.6-7
Penultimate draft with list of edits by Georges Borchardt, notes, transcribe letters to Goffredo [Fofi?], undated	d Container 13.1-2
'Last draft.' Draft with copyedits, style sheet, partial page proofs, email, 2007-2008	Container 13.3
Partial page proofs, undated	Container 13.4
'Second pass' page proofs with edits (April 2008), photograph insert proofs draft of index with corrections list, 2008	Sometimes Sometimes 13.5-6
Editorial correspondence, rights permissions, 2007-2008	Container 14.1
Book jacket proof, author questionnaire, launch party invitation and guest 2008	list, Container 14.2
Letters from readers, 2008, 2011	Container 14.3
Reviews, 2008-2009, 2019	Container 14.4
The Woman Who Walked on Water (novel, 1996)	
Manuscript with copyedits, June 1995	Container 14.5
Editorial correspondence, book jacket proof, 1995	Container 14.6
Letters from readers, 1996	Container 14.7
Reviews, 1995	Container 14.8

Subseries B. Short Works, circa 1983-2020, undated

Book Reviews. Drafts, proofs, published pieces, contracts, 1999-2019	Container 14.9, osf 1
Early works - 'Old Stories/Papers Unpublished'	
A Book of Gardens. Draft, undated	Container 14.10
Boyfriends. Draft, undated	Container 14.11
The Broken Umbrella. Draft, undated	Container 14.12
Cyanide. Draft, undated	Container 14.13
Everyone Loves a Lover but Me. Draft, undated	Container 14.14
The Fault. Draft, undated	Container 14.15
Loi Kratong. Draft, undated	Container 14.16
"Love Set you Going Like a Fat Gold Watch." Draft, undated	Container 14.17
Marco Polo. Draft, letter, undated	Container 14.18
Maria Schell's Smile. Draft, undated	Container 14.19
A Story for Galway Kinnell. Draft, undated	Container 14.20
The Swiss Horse. Draft, undated	Container 14.21
The West Face. Draft, undated	Container 14.22
Essays	
'The Double Life of Liliane talk.' Notes, draft, undated	Container 14.23
The Elephant Vanishes by Haruki Murakami (review). Draft, undated	Container 14.24
Foreword to new edition of Elsa Morante's novel History (translated by William Weaver, Steerforth Press, 2008). Draft, email, catalog, 2007-20	Container 14.25
First and Second Wives. Draft, undated	Container 14.26
Great Aunt Dorothea Mendelssohn or, Foam on the Wave (published in Yale Review)	

Research. Book excerpts, internet articles, notes, 2016	Container 15.1
Draft, published version (internet printout), 2020, undated	Container 15.2
Love in a Second Language. Draft, undated	Container 15.3
On Her Own (published in Vogue, June 2012). Published version fragment (internet printout), draft, 2012	Container 15.4
Reading with Imagination (published in The New York Times, 15 April 20 Published articles (internet printout), 2015	015). Container 15.5
Shelf Life. Email printout, August 2015	Container 15.6
Thanksgiving at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. Drafts, galley proofs, expense sheet, black and white contact sheets depicting the camp, c 1983[?]	t milainer
Thinking About Christa Wolf. Draft, undated	Container 15.8
The World is Just a Book Away. Draft, September 2016	Container 15.9
The Writing Life (published in Book World, 2002[?]). Published version (photocopy), undated	Container 15.10
Untitled essay about Joan Didion. Draft, email, 2010	Container 15.11
Untitled essay about Southeast Asian Writers Award. Draft, circa 2005[?]	Container 15.12
Published Short Stories	
L'Esprit de L'Escalier (published in The Paris Review; a version appears la in the novel The Double Life of Liliane). Proof (May 1991), letter, 1991	ter Container 15.13
Every Time I Have a Cup of This Tea, I Will Think of Africa (published in The Quarterly). Proof, January 1991	Container 15.14
Hotter (published in The New Yorker, 21 December 1998)	
Draft, undated	Container 15.15
Galley proofs (two sets), November 1998	
Page proofs, December 1998	Container osf 1

Complete issue, 19

Container 15.15

The House at Belle Fontaine (published in The American Scholar, Summer 2007). Manuscript, page proof, April 2007, undated	Container 15.16
Impotence (working title The Horse's Swimming Pool; a version appears later in the novel Siam). Draft with edits by Gordon Lish, editorial correspondence, 1991	Container 15.17
La Mayonette (published in The New Yorker, 8 July 1996). Contract, correspondence, galley proofs, complete issue, letter, 1996	Container 15.18
Yoga (published in Epoch, 2003). Page proofs, 2003	Container 15.19
Untitled story for Pen America journal. Email, draft, 2011	Container 15.20

Container 16.8

Series II. Personal and Professional, 1956-2020, undated

Articles about Tuck, 1996-2008 Container 15.21 **Awards** Elsa Morante Prize, Italian Cultural Institute of New York (awarded for Woman of Rome) Container 15.22 Email, program, 2008 Award, 2008 Container osb 1 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (nominated for The News from **Container** Paraguay). Letter, 2006 15.23 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (awarded for Postcards from Marianne). **Container** Correspondence, application, 2017-2018 15.24 National Book Award. Correspondence, itineraries, program, galley proof for Container acceptance speech, congratulatory cards and letters, articles and book reviews, 15.25 2004-2005 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction 1999-2000 (nominated for Siam or the Woman Who Shot a Man). Programs, **Container** synopsis, photographs, clippings, 2000 16.1 2000-2001 (Tuck was one of three judges). Judge's packet, correspondence, **Container** list of nominees, program, photographs, 2000-2001 16.2 Contracts and Royalty Statements Container 16.3 Assorted contracts, statements, 2010, 2015 Audio Books. Contracts, 2005-2020 Container 16.4 Container Book Contributions. Contracts, correspondence, 2007-2013 16.5 'Grove Press' (documents for several books). Contracts, royalty statements, **Container** correspondence, 2010-2018 16.6 HarperCollins Publishers (documents for Limbo, News from Paraguay, Woman Container of Rome). Royalty statements, contracts, letters, 2001-2019 16.7 'I Married You for Happiness'

Contracts, emails, permissions, 2011

Screen adaptation by Annette Haywood-Carter. Prospectus, letters, 2011-2	Container 16.9
'Interviewing Matisse or the Woman Who Died Standing Up.' Contracts, roya statements, emails, 1990-2012	alty Container 16.10
Newspaper and Periodical Submissions. Contracts, 2011-2017	Container 16.11
'Siam' or the Woman Who Shot a Man. Contract, royalty statements, 1998-20	Container 16.12
'Translation contracts.' Contracts, 1987	Container 16.13
Woman of Rome: A Life of Elsa Morante. Contracts, correspondence regardi Italian edition, 2007-2011	ing Container 16.14
The Woman Who Walked on Water. Contract, royalty statements, 1996-2003	Container 16.15
Correspondence	
Angell, Roger (The New Yorker), 2004-2015, undated	Container 17.1
'Authors'	
А-Н, 1990-2014	Container 17.2
Hardwick, Elizabeth, 1991-2000, undated	Container 17.3
Hempel, Amy, 1991-2001, undated	Container 17.4
I-P, 1993-2018	Container 17.5
Kiernan, Frances, 1997-1998	Container 17.6
Livesey, Margot, 2000-2004	Container 17.7
MacInnes, Mairi, 1989-2008, undated (includes poems)	Container 17.8
R-Z, first names only / unidentified, 1985-2015	Container 17.9
Harding, Alexandra (Georges Borchardt, Inc.), 1991-1993	Container 17.10
Huneven, Michelle, 1985-1987	Container 17.11

Lish, Gordon, 1988-2017, undated Container 17.12 Publishers, editors, etc., 1994-2010 Container 17.13 **Container** National Endowment for the Humanities proposal, July 1983 18.1 'Paraguay' Container 2005 visit. Email, travel journal, written remarks, clippings, 2005 18.2 2009 visit. PEN Edward and Lily Tuck Award for Paraguayan Literature award Container materials, travel journal, speech drafts, 2009 18.3 **Container** 'Thailand' (S.E.A. Write Award). Correspondence, draft of response, clipping, 2005 18.4 University Radcliffe College English and literature course papers, 1956-1960 Container 18.5 Unofficial transcript, 1975 Container 18.6 Container osf 1 Diploma, 1960 Sorbonne University **Container** Admissions documents, student identification cards, transcripts, 1975-1977 18.7 **Container** Course notebooks; also exam booklets, etc., 1975-1977 18.8-11 **Container** The World of John Gardner. Thesis with letter from John Gardner, 1977 18.12 **Container** Columbia University (translation workshop). Unofficial transcript, 1981 18.13 Writing course materials (taught by Gordon Lish) Container 19.1 Orientation letters, class rosters, 1988-1989 **Container** Notebook (Spring/Fall 1988). February-December 1988 19.2

Notebook (Spring 1989). February-May 1989, February 1990, October 1991

Container 19.3

Index of Correspondents

- Akalaitis, JoAnne--2.7
- Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (Robin Desser)--8.11
- Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill (Firm) (Shannon Ravenel)--8.11
- American Academy in Rome (Pina Pasquantonio)--11.5, 14.3
- Anchor Books (Publisher) (Gerald Howard)--8.11
- Angell, Roger (The New Yorker)--15.15, 17.1
- Angelo Colla Editore (Angelo Colla)--16.14
- Antioch Review (Bob Fogarty)--15.25
- Appleton, Myra (Lear's, Cosmopolitan)--4.7, 15.18
- Arteseros, Sally--2.7
- Arts Club of Chicago (Kathy S. Cottong)--8.9
- Asher, Linda--11.1
- Atheneum (Judith T. Kern)--5.7
- The Atlantic (C. Michael Curtis)--15.17
- Avon Books (Robert B. Wyatt)--5.7
- Baldwin, Sybil--14.3
- Barrett, Andrea--7.4, 17.2
- Barron, Jeannette Montgomery, 1956- -- 11.9
- Basirico, Paola--10.4, 11.10, 14.3
- Bernabo, Luigi--11.9
- Bertolucci, Bernardo--11.5, 17.2
- Biddle, Flora Miller--2.7
- Bomb--5.3 (Suzan Sherman); 16.11 (Betty Sussler)
- Brandt & Brandt (Carl D. Brandt)--5.7
- Brée, Germaine--4.7, 17.2
- Buckley, Gail Lumet, 1937- -- 14.3
- Casey, John, 1939- --17.2
- Charles Scribner's Sons (Stuart Johnson)--5.7
- Chace, Susan--4.7
- Chatfield-Taylor, Adele, 1945- -- 14.3
- Conarroe, Joel--2.7
- Cooke, Carolyn--4.4
- Corsi, Pietro, 1937- -- 14.3
- Coumans, Jacqueline--2.7, 4.4
- Cramer, Liz--18.2
- Cunningham, Michael, 1952- -- 17.2
- Curley, Walter J. P. (United States. Embassy (France))--4.7
- David R. Godine, Publisher (David R. Godine)--5.7
- Davis-Goff, Annabel--7.5
- de Gallegos, Evangelista Troche (Minister of Tourism, Paraguay)--18.2
- De Gramont, Laure--4.4
- Dewse, David A.--8.9
- Dillon, Millicent--2.7, 4.4
- Disegni, Jacqueline--14.3
- Dodd, Mead & Company (Margaret Norton)--5.7
- Donn, Linda [LDonn] [email]--14.3
- Duffy, Trent--1.4, 2.7, 6.5, 7.2, 14.1, 14.3, 15.25
- Edwards, Harold M.--3.1
- Eisler, Benita--17.2

- Elie, Paul, 1965- -- 12.6
- Emery, Susan--4.4
- Epoch (Heidi E. Marschner)--15.19
- Ermelino, Louisa--11.1, 14.3
- Ettlinger, Marion--14.3
- Farrar, Straus, and Giroux--5.7 (Robert Giroux); 8.11 (John Glusman)
- Feilchenfeldt, Konrad--4.4
- Ferrer, Penny--4.4
- Fiction (Mark Jay Mirsky)--14.7
- Foreign Affairs (Lucy Despard)--4.7
- FitzGerald, Frances, 1940- ("Frankie")--4.7, 14.7, 17.2
- Fraser, Kennedy--17.9
- Fuller, Joseph (Joey)--2.7, 4.4
- Furman, Laura--2.7, 4.4, 14.3, 16.5, 17.2
- Gardner, John--18.12
- George Braziller, Inc. (Patricia Rosten)--5.7
- Georges Borchardt, Inc.--7.5 (Celine Little); 8.1, 8.11, 11.2, 11.9, 14.3 16.6, 16.14 (Georges Borchardt); 8.11 (DeAnna Heindel, Marina Harss); 11.9, 16.8, 16.14 (Valerie Borchardt)
- Gillies, Isabel, 1970- --4.4
- Gooch, Brad, 1952- -- 17.2
- Gratz, Irma D.--4.7
- Grove/Atlantic--1.3, 2.7, 8.11, 15.25, 16.8, 17.13 (Elisabeth Schmitz); 1.5 (Amy Vreeland); 2.3 (Sal Destro); 2.3 (Julia Berner-Tobin); 2.4 (Jazmine Goguen); 4.1 (Michael Hornburg); 4.3 (Jessica Monahan); 4.4, 17.13 (Joan Bingham); 16.6, 16.8 (Amy Hundley); 16.8 (Erica Nunez)
- Guare, John--14.2
- Guth, Polly--4.4
- Hagedorn, Jessica Tarahata, 1949- -- 17.2
- Hall, Oakley M.--4.7, 15.25
- Halsey Publishing Co. (Steve Winston)--17.13
- Harcourt Brace & Company (Sal Robinson)--11.9
- Harding, Alexandra (Georges Borchardt, Inc.)--17.10
- Hardwick, Elizabeth--17.3
- Harper & Row, Publishers (Cass Canfield, 1897-1986)--5.7
- HarperCollins (Firm)--4.4 (Clare Reihill); 5.2 (Lydia Weaver); 6.5 (Sue Llewellyn); 7.2 (Andrew _____); 7.4-5, 14.1, 14.3, 14.25, 16.14, 17.13 (Terry Karten); 7.4-5 (Jennifer Hart, Marie Elena Martinez); 7.5 (Danny Mulligan); 8.11 (Robert Jones); 14.1 (Julia Felsenthal); 16.14 (Jonathan Burnham); 17.13 (Paul Baggaley)
- Harrison, DeSales, 1968- -- 2.7
- Harry Ransom Center (Sigler, Danielle Brune)--10.6
- Harvard University Press (William B. Goodman)--5.7
- Haskell, Molly--14.3
- Haywood-Carter, Annette--16.9
- Hazzard, Shirley, 1931-2016--11.1, 17.9
- Hempel, Amy--4.4, 4.7, 9.5, 17.4
- Houghton, Helen Handley--4.7, 17.5
- Houghton Mifflin Company (Janet Silver)--8.11
- Howard, Richard, 1929- --4.7
- Howland and Company (Louie Howland [?])--5.7
- Hudson Review--4.7 (Frederick Morgan, 1922-2004); 17.13 (Ronald Koury)
- Huneven, Michelle, 1953- --14.1, 17.11

- Hurley, Cheryl--15.25
- International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (Clare Hogan)--15.23
- Jacobson, F. [?]--4.7
- J. B. Lippincott Company (Peg Cameron, Genevieve Young)--5.7
- John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (André Bernard)--15.24
- Johnson, Diane, 1934- -- 2.7, 14.3
- Kahn, Nathaniel--3.1
- Kaplan, Marsha--17.5
- Kelley, Lynn, 1943- -- 2.7
- Kiernan, Frances--5.2, 10.4, 12.6, 14.1, 17.6
- King, Lily--17.5
- Kinnicutt, Laura--3.1
- Kohler, Sheila--4.7, 8.9
- Koseff, Robbie--2.7
- Lazard, Sasha--4.4
- Le Vot, André--17.9
- Lish, Gordon--4.7, 17.12, 19.1
- Livesey, Margot--2.7, 4.4, 9.5, 14.3, 15.25, 17.7
- Lopate, Phillip, 1943- -- 2.7
- Luigi Bernabo Associates (Daniela Bernabò, Luigi Bernabò)--16.14
- MacDowell Colony--4.7, 14.7 (Mary Carswell, 1933-2018; Pat Dodge); 7.5, 8.9 (Cheryl A. Young)
- MacInnes, Mairi (married name McCormick)--2.7, 4.7, 17.8
- Macmillan Publishing Company (Lindy Hess)--5.7
- Malcolm, Janet--17.5
- Mallon, Thomas, 1951- (Tom)--9.5, 17.5
- Maraini, Dacia--10.4
- Masera, Francesca--16.14
- Mason/Charter Publishers (Margaret B. Parkinson)--5.7
- McCall's (Helen DelMonte)--5.7
- McEneely, Naomi (Lake Forrest Book Store)--4.4
- McNear, Suzanne--2.7
- Messud, Claire, 1966- -- 17.5
- Millar, Carola [from email address; may not be correct name]--14.3
- Minot, Susan--17.5
- Mississippi Review and Center for Writers (Barthelme, Frederick, 1943-)--17.13
- Moody, Rick--11.9, 14.3
- Moore, Lorrie--17.5
- Morgan, Paula--15.25
- Muhlstein, Anka--17.5
- National Book Foundation (U.S.) (Harold Augenbraum)--14.3, 15.25, 18.2
- New Directions Publishing (Griselda Jackson Ohannessian, 1927-)--8.11
- The New Yorker--15.15, 17.1, 17.13 (Roger Angell); 17.13 (Bill Buford); 15.17 (Daniel Menaker)
- Nicholson, Christopher, 1956- -- 9.4
- Nicholson, George--4.4
- The Oriental, Bangkok (Kurt Wachtveitl)--18.4
- Other Press (Janice Goldklang, Judith Gurewich)--8.1
- Overstreet, Richard--14.3
- Overlook Press (Peter Mayer)--8.7
- The Paris Review (George Plimpton)--4.7, 14.18, 15.13, 17.13

- PEN America: A Journal for Writers and Readers (M. Mark)--15.11, 15.20
- PEN/Faulkner Foundation (Janice Delaney)--16.2
- Penguin Putnam (Rosemary Ahern)--8.7
- Perera, Lolin--5.9
- Perseus/PGW (Bill Getz)--16.8
- Picador USA (George Witte)--8.11
- Plimpton, George--4.4
- Poets & Writers (Elliot Figman)--4.7, 7.5, 15.13
- Prose, Francine, 1947- -- 14.3
- Proulx, Annie--17.5
- Raimo, Veronica, 1978- -- 9.7, 11.9, 14.3
- Random House (Firm)--4.4 (LuAnn Walther); 8.11 (Daniel Menaker); 14.3 (Shelley Wanger)
- Rawstron, Diana--6.5
- Redazione, Martina--11.9
- Reiss, James (Miami University)--15.25
- Rich, Kathy--14.3
- Riverhead Books (New York, N.Y.) (Celina Spiegel; goes by Cindy)--14.6, 15.25, 17.9, 17.13
- Robinson, Roxana--4.4, 14.3
- Roco, Mike [from email address; may not be correct name] (PEN America)--14.3
- Rojas, Berta (Ambassador of Tourism of Paraguay)--18.2
- Rose, Alison [from email address; may not be correct name]--4.4
- Rose, Phyllis, 1942- -- 17.9
- Rothschild, Ann--2.7
- Ruggiero, Giulia--9.6, 10.2-3, 11.1-2, 11.9-10, 14.1, 14.3
- Schulman, Alix--14.7
- Schutt, Christine, 1948- -- 8.9, 17.9
- Seidel, Phyllis--5.7
- Serpa, Louise L. (Louise Larocque)--17.9
- Silber, Joan--14.3
- Smith, Niki--14.3
- Southeast Asian Write Awards (M. R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Somsri Hansirisawasdi)--18.4
- Spackman, Barbara, 1952- -- 11.6
- Stamford Advocate (David Podgurski)--15.25
- Stille, Alexander ("Sandro")--11.1
- Suhrkamp Verlag (Webster Younce)--16.8
- Taylor, Benjamin, 1952- --11.1, 14.3, 17.9
- Trulock, Sharon--4.4
- Tucci, Maria--14.3, 17.9
- Tuck, Jessica, 1963- --4.4, 14.3
- Valisa, Silvia, 1971- --9.7, 11.2, 11.6, 11.9-10
- Volk, Patricia--14.3
- Walbert, Kate, 1961- --4.4, 9.5
- Warren, William, 1930- (Bill)--18.4
- Watson, Jeannette (Bookstore owner) (Lenox Hill Bookstore)--2.7, 15.25
- Weinberg, Susan--7.5
- West, Alison, 1953- -- 2.7
- William Morrow and Company (Paul Bresnick)--8.11
- Willis, Mary Pleshette--4.7
- Wineapple, Brenda--7.4, 17.9
- W. W. Norton & Company--5.7 (Sherry Huber); 8.11 (Alane Salierno Mason, 1964-)
- _____, S____ [email]--14.3