

# Guide to the Yusef Komunyakaa Papers

JWJ MSS 152



by Beinecke staff

February 2015

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

---

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	4
Immediate Source of Acquisition .....	4
Conditions Governing Access .....	4
Conditions Governing Use .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Processing Information .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	5
Arrangement .....	5
Collection Contents .....	6
Series I: Writings and other papers, 1930-2009 .....	6
Series II: Correspondence and other papers, 1976-2014 .....	7
Series III: Printed materials, 1970s-2000s .....	9
Series IV: Audiovisual materials .....	10
Series V: Computer media .....	11
Books and serials .....	12
Selected Search Terms .....	13

---

## 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:** JWJ MSS 152

**CREATOR:** Komunyakaa, Yusef

**TITLE:** Yusef Komunyakaa papers

**DATES:** 1930s-2014

**BULK DATES:** 1976–2014

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 35.21 linear feet (49 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection consists of writings, correspondence, writings of others, other papers, printed materials, audiovisual materials, and electronic media that document the life and work of African American poet Yusef Komunyakaa. The writings and correspondence are intermixed with writings of others and other papers that collectively document Komunyakaa's poetry, writings, teaching, and personal life. Printed materials include clippings, writings by Komunyakaa, and promotional materials. Audiovisual materials include audio and video recordings of Komunyakaa.

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

---

## 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.komunyakaa>.

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

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Chris Calhoun Agency on the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts & Letters Fund and the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2014.

---

### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 48 (audiovisual materials): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 49 (digital media): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

---

### Conditions Governing Use

The Yusef Komunyakaa 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.

---

### Preferred Citation

Yusef Komunyakaa Papers. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

---

### 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.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Yusef Komunyakaa is an African American poet and recipient of the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

## **Scope and Contents**

The collection consists of writings, correspondence, writings of others, other papers, printed materials, audiovisual materials, and electronic media that document the life and work of African American poet Yusef Komunyakaa. The writings and correspondence are intermixed with writings of others and other papers that collectively document Komunyakaa's poetry, writings, teaching, and personal life. Printed materials include clippings, writings by Komunyakaa, and promotional materials. Audiovisual materials include audio and video recordings of Komunyakaa.

---

## **Arrangement**

Organized into five series: I. Writings and Other Papers, 1930-2009. II. Correspondence and Other Papers, 1976-2014. III. Printed Materials, 1970s-2000s. IV. Audiovisual Materials, undated. V. Electronic Media, undated.

---

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Writings and other papers, 1930-2009

10 linear feet (10 boxes)

b. 1	Holograph notes, drafts, correspondence, photographs, and other papers	1930-1999
b. 2	Holograph notes, drafts, correspondence, and photographs	1980-1992
b. 3	Holograph notes, drafts, correspondence, and printed material	1980-2001
b. 4	Holograph notes, galley proofs, correspondence, teaching materials, and printed materials Includes a proof of <i>Talking Dirty to the Gods</i> .	1991-2002
b. 5	Holograph notes, typescripts, drafts, and other papers	circa 2005
b. 6	<a href="#">Typescripts, writings of others, and correspondence</a> Includes drafts of Komunyakaa's <i>Shangri-La</i> , <i>Blue Notes</i> , and <i>Thieves of Paradise</i> . Also includes two pieces of mail art from Reetika Vazirani.	1997-2000
b. 7	Typescripts, holograph notes, drafts, writings of others, printed materials, correspondence, and other papers	1980-2009
b. 8	Holograph notes and drafts	2000s
b. 9	Holograph notes, drafts, typescripts, galley proofs, writings of others, and other papers Includes typescripts and galleys for <i>Thieves of Paradise</i> , <i>Magic City</i> , <i>Dien Cai Dau</i> , <i>I Apologize for the Eyes in My Head</i> , and <i>Dream and Spleen: Uncollected Early Poems 1973-1976</i> .	1973-2005
b. 10	Holograph notes and drafts	2000-2005

**Series II: Correspondence and other papers, 1976-2014***25.88 linear feet (30 boxes)*

b. 11	Correspondence, promotional materials, and other papers relating to events, readings, and publications	1980-1999
b. 12	Correspondence, clippings, printed materials, and other papers relating to academic events and publications and holograph notes and drafts	1998-2002
b. 13	Academic and professional correspondence from Indiana University and Princeton	1990-2009
b. 14	Correspondence and other papers, mostly relating to Komunyakaa's Pulitzer Prize	1985-1994
b. 15	Professional and personal correspondence regarding events and academic service	1986-1996
b. 16	Correspondence, writings of others, academic papers, and other papers	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 17	Writings of others, teaching and research materials, and related correspondence	undated
b. 18	Writings of others and related correspondence	circa 2000s
b. 19	Professional correspondence, promotional materials, writings, and notes	2002-2006
b. 20	Professional correspondence and other papers	2002-2006
b. 21	Professional correspondence and other papers	1976-2009
b. 22	Professional correspondence and other papers	1990s-2000s
b. 23	Writings of others, typescripts, printed materials, flyers, correspondence, and notes and drafts by Komunyakaa	1990s-2010s
b. 24	Manuscripts sent for review, invitations, appearances, events, and notes	2012-2014
b. 25	Correspondence relating to events, appearances, and awards, writings submitted by others for review, and notes by Komunyakaa	1990-1999
b. 26	Correspondence relating to events, travels, readings, and appearances, writings submitted by others for review	2000-2009
b. 27	Correspondence relating to events, travels, readings, appearances, and academic events, printed materials, and writings submitted by others for review	2000-2009
b. 28	Correspondence relating to events, appearances, and academic events and printed materials Includes piano/vocal score for "Slip Knot" Opera with music by T.J. Anderson and libretto by Komunyakaa.	2000-2009
b. 29	Correspondence, flyers, faxes, announcements, typescript pages, and writings of others	2002
b. 30	Correspondence, flyers, faxes, announcements, typescript pages, and writings of others	circa 2002
b. 31	Correspondence relating to events, flyers, itineraries, receipts, notes, and typescripts	2000-2002
b. 32	Correspondence relating to events, flyers, clippings, and notes	2001-2006

b. 33	Correspondence relating to events, flyers, clippings, and notes	2001-2006
b. 34	Correspondence relating to events, flyers, clippings, and notes	1990-1996
b. 35	Correspondence relating to events, academic work, and publications, flyers, clippings, announcements, and other papers	1990-1994
b. 36	Correspondence relating to events, academic work, and publications, flyers, clippings, and printed materials	1984-1996
b. 37	Professional correspondence, notes, flyers, clippings, printed materials, and other papers	circa 2003
b. 38	Professional and personal correspondence, notes, flyers, clippings, printed materials, and other papers	1996
b. 39	Professional correspondence, writings of others, and other papers	1996-2005
b. 40	Professional correspondence, writings of others, notes, drafts, and other papers	1991-2005



**Series III: Printed materials, 1970s-2000s***1.41 linear feet (7 boxes)*

b. 41	Periodicals	1970s-2000s
b. 42	Periodicals	1970s-2000s
b. 43	Clippings, including Komunyakaa writings	circa 1980s-2000s
b. 44	Calendars and poster	1990s
b. 45	Calendar and printed material	1990-1999
b. 46	Posters, broadsides, and publications	circa 1996
b. 47	Posters and printed material	1990s-2000s

**Series IV: Audiovisual materials***0.42 linear feet (1 box)*

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

b. 48, [REDACTED] 39002099362734	Apinana Taylor, "Whakapapa" / Parihaka, "The Art of Passive Resistance" <i>1 Audiocassette 01:22:11 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> The program is distorted at times.	undated
b. 48, [REDACTED] 39002099362742	Elisabeth Kuhn's Reading <i>1 Audiocassette 00:32:19 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> The program is distorted at times.	2000 September 19
b. 48, [REDACTED] 39002099362759	Yusef Komunyakaa, UCSD <i>1 Audiocassette 00:54:38 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> A high amount of hiss can be heard on the tape.	2001 April 18
b. 48, [REDACTED] 39002099362767	"The Real Deal" <i>1 Videocassette (VHS) 00:27:23 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated

**Series V: Computer media***0.42 linear feet (1 box)*

Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| b. 49 | 4 Compact Discs   |
| b. 49 | 1999 pew fellowships in the arts WORKS BY PEW FELLOWS IN MUSIC COMPOSITION<br>2014-jwj-15-0001<br>1 CD-R 669614444 bytes (669.61 Megabytes.)    |
| b. 49 | The Sour Thunder 1997-2000 Keith + Mendi Obadike<br>2014-jwj-15-0002<br>1 CD-R 502020332 bytes (502.02 Megabytes.)                              |
| b. 49 | Pablo Neruda<br>2014-jwj-15-0003<br>1 CD-R 38140076 bytes (381.14 Megabytes.)   |
| b. 49 | 2005 Bread Loaf Writers' Conference Reading Patricia Hampl & Yusef Komunyakaa<br>2014-jwj-15-0004<br>1 CD-R 623646956 bytes (623.65 Megabytes.) |

**Books and serials**

*1 linear foot (1 box)*

Books and serials

---

## **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**

African American poets -- 20th Century  
American literature -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century  
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

### **Genres / Formats**

Audiovisual materials  
Born digital

### **Occupations**

Authors, American -- 20th Century  
Poets -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Komunyakaa, Yusef