

# Inventory of the Martha Courtot Papers

(#2004-01)

*Note: This document is a preliminary inventory, not a completed finding aid. The collection is surveyed but not processed, and its organization and composition are subject to change. This inventory is intended to help researchers better understand the general scope and content of the collection.*

**Repository:** Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

**Collection Title:** Martha Courtot papers

**Collection Number:** 2004-01

**Physical Description:** 10 linear feet (4 cartons, 10 manuscript boxes)

**Creator:** Martha Courtot

**Date (inclusive):** 1960-2000, bulk 1975-2000

**Language of Material:** English

**Abstract:** Martha Courtot was a lesbian poet whose writing focuses on lesbian identity, feminism, and fat acceptance. The majority of the collection consists of Courtot's poetry, as well as other writing, including journals, essays, and novels.

**Preferred Citation:**

[Identification of item], Martha Courtot papers (#2004-01), The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

**Conditions Governing Access:**

Collection is open for research.

**Publication Rights:**

For the status of the rights to this material, please contact the GLBT Historical Society archives.

**Acquisition Information:**

For this material's acquisition information, please contact the GLBT Historical Society archives.

**Processing Information:**

Inventory created by Isaac Fellman in 2020, based on early processing by Christopher Scott, with updates by Marjorie Bryer in 2011.

This inventory uses terminology for LGBTQ people that was in current use at the time of its creation. Descriptive language for queer identities evolves quickly and some of these terms may now be dated or even offensive. Finding aids are themselves historical documents; they reflect the moment in which they were written and often reflect the terms that subjects used for themselves. Please contact the GLBT Historical Society Archivist with questions or comments.

**Biographical/Organizational History Note:** Martha Courtot was a lesbian poet whose writing focuses on lesbian identity, feminism, and fat acceptance.

**Scope and Content:** The majority of the collection consists of Courtot's poetry, as well as other writing, including journals, essays, and novels. The poetry collection includes poems published in journals, anthologies, newsletters, three published collections of Courtot's poetry, several binders of both published and unpublished poetry, manuscript drafts, notes, and edits. Other writing in the collection includes essays, critical writing, journalism, novels, and screenplays. The creative writing includes at least two novels and a screenplay. There are several essays written by Courtot during her time at Sonoma State University included in the collection. There are several personal journals that range from 1975 to 2000. The collection also includes a few photographs and personal/professional records.

**Indexing Terms:**

Lesbians

Fat-acceptance movement

Feminism

Literature

Diaries

**Container Listing**

## Series 1. Writing

### Subseries 1.1: Poetry and Short Stories

#### Box 1:

1/1	I: "A-I"	Not Dated
1/2	I: "J-S"	1974-1984
1/3	I: "T-Z"	1960's – 1984
1/4	II: "1960 to 1976 Pre-Journey"	1960's – 1976
1/5	III: "Journey to Santa Rosa 1979"	1977-1979
1/6	III: "From Santa Rosa 1980"	1980-1984
1/7	"The Woman Moving Through The Dark"	Not Dated
1/8	"GLOE Women Writer Readings"	1978-1992
1/9	"The Drowned Girl Now Rises"	Not Dated
1/10	"Now All the Blood Is Outside Me & Other Poems" 1993	
1/11	"The Music of My Mother & Other Poems"	1998

#### Box 2:

2/	"II From Santa Rosa 1980"	1980-1984
2/	"II Journey to Santa Rosa 1979"	1974-1979
2/	III: "1960-1979"	1960-1979
2/	Notebook: "Carried to GLOE class to write during writing periods," circa 1979	
2/	Pilgrimage: A Season in Berkeley	Not Dated
2/	"Amnesia" & Other Poems	1997
2/	Copies – for binders	1993-1998

2/	“Writing Notes to Myself” & Other Poems	1995-1996
2/	Not for Book	1995-1998
2/	Possible Poems	1978-2000
2/	February 18, 1986 & Other Poems	Through 2000
2/	Poems Old	1974-1987
2/	Poems Old II	1974-1988
2/	Unfinished	1985-1988
2/	Novel Notes	1997
2/	Novel Notes	
2/	Novel Notes	
2/	Novel Notes	
2/	Novel Notes	
2/	Misc. GLOE Critiques & Poems With Corrections	1997-1998
2/	Everything Breaks (Manuscript & Correspondence)	2007

Box 3:

3/32	Manuscript Part 1	1992
3/33	Manuscript Part 2: <i>A Spiritual Biography &amp; Light Flashes</i> , 1993, 1995	
3/34	Manuscript Part 3	1990-1995
3/35	Manuscript Part 4	
3/36	Angels & Prophets—novel notes	

Box 4:

4/37	“Rejects Disc 2” Poems from 1989-94	1889-1994
4/38	Poetry 1992-1993	1992-1993
4/39	Poetry 1997-1998	1997-1998
4/40	Manuscript Collection Part 1	1990-1993
4/41	Manuscript Collection Part 2	1992
“The Drowned Girl Now Rises”		
4/42	Manuscript Collection Part 3	1990-1993
4/43	Manuscript Collection Part 4	
4/44	Manuscript Collection Part 5	1995

Box 5:

Series 2: Correspondence

Subseries 2.1: Professional

5/45	Correspondence – Professional	Circa 1997-1999
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Subseries 2.2: Personal, Health, and Literary Fund

5/46	Correspondence – Personal, Health, and Literary Fund	Circa 2000
5/47	My Life	
5/48	Essays	
5/49	Poems in Progress and Notes	1995-1998
5/50	<i>Tribe</i> (a collection of Courtot Poems)	
5/51	Rituals, Prayers, and Chants	

5/52 Short Stories

5/53 Miscellaneous Short Writing: “Betrayal” &  
“In Praise of Daughters”

5/54 *The Priest Killer* (Notes and Drafts)

Subseries: 1.3: Screenwriting

5/55 *Light Flashes*, a Screenplay

5/56 Screenwriting – Creative Writing & Professional Notes

Subseries 1.4: Journalism

5/57 Writing for *Women’s Voices Sonoma* 1986-2000  
*County & The Press Democrat*

Box 6:

6/58 *The Blood Gift*, with comments from Adrienne Rich

Box 7 This carton contains all of the published poems by Courtot in the collection. There are several different journals and anthologies included that contain her work. A few of the titles include *Sinister Wisdom*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, *Logos*, *The American Voice*, *Manzanita Quarterly*, *Ruah*, and *Oasis*. Also, the box contains three published collections of Courtot’s work (*Night River*, 1982, *Courtot Manuscript*, 1983, *The Woman Moving Through the Dark*, 1983.) *Tribe* is also a published collection of Courtot poems (in 5/50).

Box 8:

Subseries 1.5: Essays and Critical Writing

Subseries Note: These writings are from Courtot’s graduate-level classes at Sonoma State University, where she pursued a Master’s in English during the 1985 and 1986 school years.

8/59 *The Waves* (Research and Paper)

8/60 Critical Writing: Yeats & Rule 1985

8/61 Rosario Castellanos & Ballad

8/62	D.H. Lawrence Poetry	
8/63	Papers – SSU – Fall 1985	1985
8/64	Graduate School Work, Spring 1984	1984
8/65	Las Mujeres!	
8/66	Notes	
8/67	Spring 1985	1985
8/68	House of Secrets	1985
8/69	House of Secrets – Notes and Drafts	1985
8/70	House of Secrets – Research	1985
8/71	Mystics – Research & Writing	
Box 9:	Sonoma State University schoolwork	
9/72	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> – Paper & Research	
9/73	Witness and Exile	1985
9/74	SSU Work – Spring 1986	
9/75	Master’s Thesis – <i>There Is Something I Have to Tell You</i>	

Box 10:	Novel <i>Wilderness Prayer</i>	
10/76	<i>Wilderness Prayer</i> Notes	
10/77	<i>Wilderness Prayers</i> Chapters 13-19	
10/78	<i>Wilderness Prayers</i> Draft	1995
10/79	<i>Wilderness Prayers</i> – 1995 – Folder 1 of 2	1995
10/80	<i>Wilderness Prayers</i> – 1995 – Folder 2 of 2	1995
10/81	<i>Wilderness Prayers</i> – 1997 – Folder 1 of 2	1997
10/82	<i>Wilderness Prayers</i> – 1997 – Folder 2 of 2	1997

## Subseries 1.6: Journals

Boxes 11, 12, and 13 are the journals of Martha Courtot. They are arranged chronologically, except for the journals in Box 13, which have no dates. The dates range from 1975-2000.

## Series 2: Correspondence

### Subseries 2.1: Professional

5/45 Correspondence – Professional

### Subseries 2.2: Personal, Health, and Literary Fund

5/46 Correspondence – Personal, Health, and Literary Fund

## Series 3: Records

### Subseries 3.1: Cassettes

Box 14:

14/1 “Martha Memorial on KBBF Radio” Sonoma County

### Subseries 3.2: Records

14/2	Sonoma State Papers	1976-1987
14/3	Job Records	
14/4	Copyright Forms	1995
14/5	Obituary and Death Certificate	2000
14/6	Memorial Celebration Handouts & Speech	2000

