

GARY FISHER

PAPERS

1973-1995

(bulk 1980-1994)

Collection number: GLC 51

James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center
San Francisco Public Library

2007

INTRODUCTION

Provenance

The Gary Fisher Papers were donated to the San Francisco Public Library in 1998 by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, the literary executor of the Gary Fisher Estate.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

Copyright and literary rights retained by literary executor, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. All permissions for publication should be addressed to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Department of English, Box 90017, 314 Allen Building, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 27708. Phone number 919-684-6869.

Collection Number

GLC 51

Size

4 cubic feet

Processed by

Timothy T. Wilson

Date Completed

August, 2007

Preferred Citation

[*Identification of item*], Gary Fisher Papers (GLC 51), James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Conservation Note

During processing, the entire collection was re-folded and re-housed in acid-free folders and boxes.

BIOGRAPHY

Gary Fisher was a gay African American man who enjoyed writing and drawing and was a dedicated diarist. He was born on June 19, 1961 in Bristol, Pennsylvania. Fisher attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1979-1983 and studied English and creative writing. He died of AIDS at the age of 32 on February 22, 1994. After his death, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick edited portions of his journals, poems and stories in order to publish *Gary in Your Pocket*. Sedgwick includes a full biography of Fisher at the end of *Gary in Your Pocket*.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection includes the written work and journals of Gary Fisher. It also includes the files created by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as she edited Fisher's work for the publication of *Gary in Your Pocket*. In addition there is a small amount of photographs, correspondence and ephemera.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The material has been arranged into five series:

Series 1. Notebooks, 1980-1994

Series 2. Journals / Diaries, 1977-1993

Series 3. Poems and Short Fiction, 1973-1994

Series 4. "Gary in Your Pocket" Files, 1993-1995

Series 5. Photographs, Correspondence and Ephemera, 1982-1994

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES 1: NOTEBOOKS, 1980-1994.

27 items (1 cubic foot)

Arranged chronologically.

This series contains Fisher's notebooks from classes that he took, and includes notes and drafts of stories and poems that he developed later. There are some interesting drawings in conte crayon and pastels as well. Occasionally there are journal-style entries on his day-to-day activities and health.

SERIES 2: JOURNALS / DAIRIES, 1977-1993.

13 items (0.75 cubic feet)

Arranged chronologically.

This series documents Fisher's activities and thoughts as an African-American gay man. The journals include everything from ticket stubs for events he attended, to copies of the sex ads he placed in gay magazines and newspapers. It also includes drawings, some notes on poems and stories,

SERIES 3: POEMS and SHORT FICTION, 1973-1994.

49 folders

Arranged alphabetically.

This series contains drafts and final copy of short fiction and poems written by Fisher. Of interest are the various drafts of "Red Cream Soda," "Tawny," "The Villains of Necessity" and "Walt" which were written and re-written over several years. The earliest items in this series are a few stories from the 1970s though most of the writing is dated after 1980.

SERIES 4: GARY IN YOUR POCKET FILES, 1993-1995.

11 folders

Arranged alphabetically by title.

This series contains material related to the publication of the book *Gary in Your Pocket* edited by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. It includes transcripts of journal and notebooks entries as well as correspondence with publishers, promotional material and reviews.

SERIES 5: PHOTOGRAPHS, CORRESPONDENCE and EPHEMERA, 1982-1994.

7 folders

This series contains some Polaroid photographs, correspondence between Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Gary Fisher, Fishers letters to and from others, "sex letters," and a drawing.

CONTAINER LIST

*Descriptions provided by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick

Box 1

SERIES 1 NOTEBOOKS, 1980-1994 (27 items)

Notebooks. Transcriptions ["Gary in Your Pocket"?]

Notebook [unnumbered]. "Kitchie Stuff" [Tawny is a character in the story]

Notebook [unnumbered]. March 15, 1989-April 22, 1993

Notebook 1. January 1989?- January 1992.

* "Light-blue bound composition book. Year 1989 appears on p. 24. Numbered pages (by printer). First page dated 1/28. Teaching notes. Story beginning :On Sundays our mother unleashed energies..." being drafted and redrafted pp.13-21. A dream on p.23. pp.27-35, notes and journal from a trip east. Date 1/31/92 appears on p. 35. Blank after p.35."

Notebook 2. April 30-May 1, 1993

* "Mead marbled bound composition book (black and white). First page dated 4/30/93. 8 or 9 pp. of hospital journal (that I don't remember reading elsewhere). Six loose sheets of long manila, written with notes for, and drafts of paragraphs of, a story about Marshall and a gun. Four long manila pp., loose, of a story called "Mr. Maddox's Face."

Notebook 3. "Music"

* "Blue, bound composition book. Cover says 'Music.' 4 written pages and many loose manila long pages of music lists."

Notebook 4. September 12, 19-- - November 2, 19--, n.d.

* "3"x5" red notebook, spiral bound at top, labeled 'ideas...'. Random notes, undated, including some little anecdotes, teaching notes, shopping lists, etc."

Notebook 5. [Poems by GCFIII] 1980-1985

* "Peacock blue two-ring looseleaf binder. Cellophane pocket on front says 'Fisher.' Copies and drafts of poems, dated 1980-1985. Four poems loose."

Notebook 6. "Ideas" 1988-January 1991

* "White speckled ring-bound notebook, ca. 5"x7" ; front cover says 'ideas'. Random notes, including many notes for/about stories (e.g. about the idea of 'Red Cream Soda.') Undated till late, but seems to begin during spring 1987 (includes notes from my class, some things later included in class journal). Little vignettes; graffiti."

Notebook 7. January 11-April 30, 1992, n.d.

* "Bound notebook, buff, unbleached cover, 6"x7". First date 1/11/92; last date 4/30/92. 13 pp. of entries. Mostly re: illness, living and dying. Notes for a zine."

Notebook 8. n.d.; July 3-August 23, 1993

* "Unbleached corrugated notebook bound with string, 4"x5". Hospital and related notes, seemingly from 6-7/93."

Notebook [9]. May 18-September 10, 1993

* "Unbleached textured string-bound notebook, 5"x7-1/2". Hospital notebook, 5/18/93-9/10/93. A few pen and pencil drawings (mostly landscapes)."

Notebook [10]. June 30, 1993-January 13, 1994

* "Unbleached corrugated notebook bound with string, 8-1/2"x11". Entries dated 6/30/93-10/18/93. Color and b/w drawings, by Gary and others."

Notebook 11. January-February 1994

* "folio diary 1994, yellow and green print paper binding, 6-7 entries."

Notebook 12. "Chaucer" Fall 1987

* "Chaucer notebook, blue paper binding, course notes, Fall '87 w/syllabus and handouts, and loose page of notes w paragraph of story in blue ink, also notes on medieval and renaissance authors."

Notebook 13. "Shakespeare" Fall 1987

* "Shakespeare Notebook, blue paper binding, 8/27-, Joel Feinman Fall '87 course notes, w/syllabus, loose leaves, notes, handouts, [notes in square brackets may be Gary's misc. commentaries]."

Notebook 14. "Fiction" 1984-1985

* "Fiction: September (24) 1984 Blue spiral bound CAI notebook, half full: notes for and on 'Villains of Necessity' w/poem and story critique, notes for other works: Radioman, Tawny, At Other People's Parties. 9/4/85 notes for Breslin's Am Poetry. Notes for story: Twelve". To do list."

Notebook 15. "Sundquist, etc."

* "Sundquist, etc. Bound composition notebook, three quarters full, blue paper binding, Feb (Spring) course notes on ethnic and women's lit., some drawings and verse, Paragraphs for papers on "Bennito Cerino" and Chaucer and Christine de Pisan"

Notebook 16. [Poetry, etc. by GCFIII] 1980-1981

* "Turquoise blue spiral notebook, poems and lyrics from 6/24, 1980 clear copies with some revisions, paginated to 33, same format to p.35; notes on characters, lyrics, notes for fiction, loose leaves from German school work[?]: poem 'Without' 9/14/81, essay on Death of a Salesman, essay on Greek drama."

Notebook 17. "English 58" [Shakespeare] Spring 19—

* "English 58, tan spiral UNC notebook, Spring 19--, notes on Shakespeare course; w/essays on Othello and Keats, Theme of excess in Jane Eyre, Frankenstein, and Tennant of Wildfied Hall, one page poem, random notes, including song lists."

Notebook 18.

* "Red UNC spiral notebook: notes for Bug, Tawny; 'Going to California Sale' notice, record lists, poem starts, notes and paper draft on To the Lighthouse; paper on O'Connor's 'Revelation'; poem 'Outside'—long narrative poem with dialogue. Typescript of Tawny's radio story, and 'Prayer'".

Notebook 19. "English 35 P" Spring 1983

* "English 35P Spring '83, William Harmon, Tan UNC spiral notebook, Poetics class notes with lit terms, and loose leaves of course notes. Loose leaf notes: prostitutes, quote from John Berger...handouts, draft of paper on Dano-Norwegian."

Notebook 20. "Shakespeare / Richmond" Fall 1988

* "Shakespeare Richmond, Fall '88, Green pebble paper bound notebook, AF-AM1B course notes, notes for story based on racialized Midsummernight's Dream; a memory, 2-5 Nellie (sophomore); list of students' papers and grades. Loose half sheet yellow, course notes, [brackets for story notes]; notes for African Am Lit for teaching; more TA notes."

Notebook [21]. "Sedgwick"

* "Sedgwick, Spring 87, blue bound composition book, notes from g/l studies course".

Notebook [22]. “—Notes—‘Dykes to Watch Out For’” [1989]-1990

* “Notes—Dykes to Watch Out For. Bound blue composition book. ‘Dykes to Watch Out For’ strips pasted onto many pages; 3 loose strips. First date is 10/10 (89?); last date is 4/10/90. Journal and writing draft entries including ‘Coupons’; lecture notes; a poem.”

Notebook 23. “Breslin” Fall 1985

* “Breslin. Tan UC spiral-bound notebook. First date 8/28/85. Class notes from Breslin class (20th C. American poetry?). 8 pp. loose notes on class. A couple of journal-like entries, a draft letter, toward end of notebook.”

Notebook 24. “Modernism (203)” Spring 1985

* “Modernism (203). Tan spiral-bound ‘made especially for the asuc store’ notebook. First date 1/22/85. Class notes from Breslin ‘Modernism’ course (Spring 85). Many loose pages on back of green forms; 3 pads of green forms with writing on backs of forms; other loose pages. Some poems and ephemera in notebook and (esp.) on loose pp.”

Box 2

Journal I. September 3, 1977-December 31, 1978

Journal II. January-December 1979

Journal III. January 1, 1980-January 14, 1981

Journal IV. January 16-November 13, 1981

Journal V. November 15, 1981-October 4, 1983

Journal VI. October 5, 1983-November 8, 1984

* “Oct 5, 83 to Nov 8, 84. ‘Searching’ brown ‘blank book’; letter from Leslie; opens with poems dated ’82; notes from Susy; poems and sketches clipped in; more poems; notes about Bug; going to California; draft letter to Bill clipped in; Ritchie Bennet memorial service; letter from Mom, Dad, Lucina and Crystal and draft of poem clipped in; news clipping and two fortunes taped in; best buys 1983, records clipped in; Oscar nominations clipping taped in; note taped in ATT; bday card from co-workers; pix tipped in; more notes for Villains of Necessity; draft of letter (?) and page from story (?) at end tipped in.”

Journal VII. November 9, 1984-July 21, 1986

* “Nov 9, ’84 to July 21, ’86; black ‘blank book’ unnumbered; drawings; Franky goes to Hollywood ticket; ad tipped in; best buys ’84; ballot stub; newspaper clipping; Ballet de Troc. Program; poem on ‘while writing term papers’ 4/20/82; letter to Mr. Blackmail personals; newsclippings, card from Don; symphony ticket; top 40; notes taped in; poem/lyric tipped in; three IDs taped in; four green pages journal supplement tipped in; address taped in ; letter to mother on parchment 12/27/85; favorite records ’85; personal ad response; ‘Dear Mr. Hunk’ two pages yellow ruled; stop AIDS project flyers; NCAA and other clippings; apt. hunting; hashbrown and top ten lists; Lily Tomlin concert, New York Matsuda; notes on cut sheets; Merchant of Venice program; Mother at Duke Med Center; ticket to new York.”

Journal VIII. July 24, 1986-December 11, 1989

* “July 24, ’86-Dec 11, ’89, black bound; opens with pastel drawing; record list; wine label; note tipped in; story notes; Midsummer Mozart program; yellow ruled sheet of journal 1/14/87; clippings; bday card; Paul Simon tix; cartoons; sex ad; dick survey on back of zeroz; personal ads; program with note on it; note from Eric Sundquist; invitation to Eve’s party; letter to Marvin; election flyer; phone number; letter to Jan; Faulkner stamp; wine labels; personal ads; card; Anita Baker ticket; cartoons (Calvin & Hobbes); card from Scott Hamm;

printout of 10/31/87 journal entry; letter to Gary, response to ad; letter Pete 3/26/88; picture of NC writing teacher; Leontyne Price program, clipping, and ticket; David Schiff program 5/88 with journal notes; Fag Club flyer with notes on back; responses to personals ads; 7/6 & 9/88 extra journal entries, printouts; letter to Gary; Midnight Run ticket; post-it; bus. Card; letter from Leslie 4/17/88; taped shut envelope; letters for ads yellow sheets; ends with Calvin and Hobbes and list of movies and opinions.”

Journal IX. March 19, 1989-December 17, 1990

* “March 19, 89 – Dec 17, 1990, white bound bk; 3 pp of yellow pad, letter to STH; phone number on paper tipped in; draft of letter to Dear Northern Italian Man’; hospital bracelet; Field of Dreams review; personals ad; Soul Survivor flyer; personals ad; letter to Marvin; ticket to Urinal; note taped in, vignette; the Slave’s Creed; clipping and top 40 list; assignation note; calendar pages; Prince tix.”

Journal X. December 31, 1990-April 25, 1993

* “Dec 31, 90-4/25/93 blue and black with cloth in photo collage cover papers; 2 columns, loose sheets tan and yellow; New Years Resolutions ’91; won contest !; clipping; clipping; bus. Card and loose cut sheet note.”

Journal XI. March 10, 1990-March 23, 1991

* “Page cut out at beginning, undated pages, black bound with Moorish tile paper covers; first dated Fri 3/10/90, 7/23/90, 7/20/90, 7/31/90, 8/22, 29; 9/2/90; 3/23/91; rest blank.”

Journal [unnumbered]. September 21, 1989-February 6, [1990?]

Journal Drawings, n.d.

Series 4: Gary In Your Pocket Files,

Evergreen Chronicles (Summer/Fall 1995) – includes GF’s Red Cream Soda”

Letter: Gary Fisher to Eve [Kosofsky Sedgwick], 1993

[Journal Transcriptions and Poems]

[Poems and Journal Transcriptions]

Reviews of *Gary in Your Pocket*

[Selected poems by several poets]

Will; Publishing contract with Duke University for *Gary In Your Pocket*; Color photocopies of Gary & his sister as children, and of “Floating Penises” drawing series]

Box 3

Series 3: Poems and Short Fiction, 1973-1994

Loose items: fiction, outlines, etc.

“After the box” 1991

“Arabesque” 1991

“Barbara” 1980

“Before Sleep” 1993

“Be-ing Dead” 1991, 1993

“Corner-Store” 1991, 1993

“Dear !” 1993

“Flower Lady”

“Friends” 1981

“Games”

“Ice Cream Talk” 1991, 1993
Letters, 1984-1987
“Linda’s”
“Making Little Thieves” 1994
“Miss Della” 1981
“Mo-Day” 1991-1993
“Mr. Madsen’s Face” 1993
“Penitence” 1981
“Picarro” 1993
“Pot Liquor”
“Radioland” 1981
“Red Cream Soda” 1993-1994
“Rodney King” 1993
“Sam & Newton” 1993
“Second Virginity” 1993
“Sex” 1993
“Several Lies About Mom” 1993
“Tawny” 1987-1993
“Telephone Man” 1993
“Three Boys” 1990, 1994
“Twelve”
“Vampire” 1980
“Villains of Necessity” 1987-1993 (2 folders, several drafts)
“Walking” 1989-1993
“Walt” 1988-1993

“Hospital Journal” 1993
“Misc.”
“Misc.: collage, journal transcriptions]
“In Progress”: “Sonnet 5: A Necessary Failure,” “The Best Book” (1986)
“Misc. Notes”
“Bits”
“Occasional” 1981-1986
“Nonsense, Waste and By-Products”
“Sedgwick” [photocopies of materials about AIDS, 1987]
“Sex Letters” 1989-1990
“a Cat Poem,” “c Cat Poem” 1992
“Hate Poem for Jim and Others”
“Poems I” 1985-1986
“Poems II” 1985
“Poems III” 1984
“Old Stuff” includes: “Odd Ventures” (1981), “7th” (1973), “8th” “What You Can’t See Can’t Hurt You” “Ross” (1974), “The Gap 9th” (1975/1976), “Mania” (1980), “The Bank Robbers”

Box 4

Series 5: Photographs, Correspondence and Ephemera, 1982-1994

“Ephemera from Journals I-XI (arranged in order) Includes important stuff—letters, drafts, journal material. [Manila envelope]

“Final batch” box—folder #1 (1989-1991)

“Final batch” box—folder #2 (1989-1991)

“Final batch” box—folder #3 [Polaroid pictures, some nudity and sexual content]

Letters 1982, 1993-1994

Letters 1993

Small notebook 1991

Sex Letters 1986-1991. Resolution re: kissing

Letters from Gary Fisher to Eve Sedgwick 1991-1993; photocopy of memorial leaflet for Fisher 1994

Gary in Your Pocket reviews and critical response, 1994-1995

Journal transcripts

Photocopies/Originals for *Gary In Your Pocket* ? [5 folders]

Envelope for “Prof. E. Sedgwick” [letters and poems 1993]

Fedex Letter envelope from Karen Kelly, Dia Center for the Arts to Eve Sedgwick, April 1994 with information about the conference “Constructing Masculinity” in which Sedgwick was a panel participant for “What is Masculinity?” includes a 3-1/2” computer disk

Fedex envelope with print-outs of several stories by Fisher: Arabesque (1991), Red Cream Soda, After the Box (1991), Mo-Day (1992), Cornerstore (1991), Tawny (1987).

Letter from Eve Sedgwick to Gary Fisher, 1987

Loose stories and poems 1985, 1992

“Sedgwick Journal ’87—Gary Fisher” 1987

Sketch pad with pastel drawings