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## Collection Summary

**Repository:** Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

**Title:** Elizabeth Bishop Estate and Posthumous Events Collection

**Dates:** 1973-2025

**Quantity:** 5.3 cubic feet (16 boxes)

The Elizabeth Bishop Estate and Posthumous Events Collection consists of materials pertaining to the literary estate of Elizabeth Bishop, managed by Alice Methfessel after the poet's death in 1979.

**Abstract:** The collection also includes ephemera and realia from various events celebrating Elizabeth Bishop since her death. Included are, pamphlets, posters, flyers, clippings, video and audio recordings, and files of general information.

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## Biographical Note

Elizabeth Bishop (8 February 1911–6 October 1979) was a Pulitzer-Prize winning poet, Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, and winner of the National Book Award. She was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1911 but after her father's death and mother's hospitalization was raised by other relatives, and her fondest childhood memories were of Nova Scotia and Cape Cod. In 1934 Bishop graduated from Vassar College. In addition to working on the school newspaper, *The Vassar Miscellany*, Bishop founded a literary magazine, *Con Spirito*, with fellow students Mary McCarthy, Eleanor Clark, and Muriel Rukeyser. Following graduation, Bishop spent several years traveling. She stayed in New York, as well as various cities in Europe and North Africa, but she finally found a home in Key West, Florida, where she made several influential friends and found inspiration for many of her most significant poems. When World War II turned Key West into a military command center, Bishop packed her suitcase again. After brief periods in Washington, an artists' colony in upstate New York and a return to New York City, Bishop set out on what was supposed to be a voyage around the world by ship. But in Rio de Janeiro, the first port, she had an allergic reaction to the fruit of a cashew and was nursed back to health by Maria Carlota de Macedo Soares. She and "Lota" fell in love and Bishop made Brazil her home for the next 17 years. She returned to the States only when in the mid 1960s it became financially necessary. She accepted teaching positions at the University of Washington, then Harvard, followed seven years later by New York University, and just prior to her death, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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## Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of materials pertinent to the literary estate of Elizabeth Bishop, managed by Alice Methfessel after the poet's death in 1979. The collection also includes ephemera and realia from various events celebrating Elizabeth Bishop since her death. Included are, pamphlets, posters, flyers, clippings, video and audio recordings, and files of general information.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged into six series.[Top](#)

## Access and Use

### Access

This collection is open for research according to the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#) without any additional restrictions.

### Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).

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## Related Material

### Related Materials

### Related Materials

- [Elizabeth Bishop Papers](#)

### Related Materials

- [Elizabeth Bishop Papers](#)

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## Subject Headings

### Names:

- Baumann, Anny
- Bell, Pearl K.
- Bishop, Elizabeth, 1911-1979
- Giroux, Robert

### Organizations:

- Farrar, Straus, and Giroux

- Vassar College

**Subjects:**

- Executors and administrators--United States
- Literature--Authors
- Publishers and publishing--United States
- Women poets, American--20th century

**Document Types:**

- Audio recordings
- Audiocassettes
- Clippings
- Contracts
- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Printed ephemera
- Video recordings (physical artifacts)

**VCL Categories:**

- LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) Life and Culture
- Literature and Writing

[Top](#)**Encoding Information**

Encoded by Laura Streett, April 2012. Updated by Mark Seidl, September 2019. Updated by Emma Gronbeck, May 2025.

[Top](#)**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements**

Audio and video recordings may need to be duplicated before access is allowed. Please contact the Archives and Special Collections Library for details.

[Top](#)**Administrative Information****Preferred Citation**

Elizabeth Bishop Estate and Posthumous Events Collection, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

**Processing Information**

Processed by Laura Streett and Janine St. Germain, 2012 and 2019.

## Acquisition Information

Some material (acquired by the Vassar College Library before 2004) was removed from the Bishop Papers; and some material came in various subsequent accessions. The materials pertaining to the Elizabeth Bishop estate were purchased in 2011.

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## Series List

### [Series I.](#) ELIZABETH BISHOP ESTATE, 1973-circa 2005

Series I is divided into five subseries. The first subseries consists of correspondence relating primarily to Alice Methfessel's stewardship of Elizabeth Bishop's literary estate. The second subseries includes galley proofs of Bishop's writings, as well of scholarly works on Bishop. The third subseries consists legal documents and other materials pertaining to Bishop's literary estate. The fourth subseries includes reviews of Bishop's *Collected Poems* and *Collected Prose* taken from various magazines and newspapers. The fifth subseries includes audio cassette recordings of a memorial service for Bishop and of a reading in honor of the tenth anniversary of her death.

### [Series II.](#) ASSORTED POSTHUMOUS EVENTS, 1981-2025

Series II gathers materials pertaining to assorted events in honor of Elizabeth Bishop after her death.

### [Series III.](#) VOICES AND VISIONS (1988), 1987-1988

Series III consists of video recordings and other materials related to the program, *Voices and Visions: A Television Course in Modern Poetry*, 1988

### [Series IV.](#) 11th ANNUAL KEY WEST LITERARY SEMINAR, 1993

Series IV gathers participant information, photographs, press clippings and other materials related to the 11th Annual Key West Literary Seminar.

### [Series V.](#) THE ART OF ELIZABETH BISHOP (1999), 1999-2000

Series V consists of participant information, video recordings, realia, and other materials pertaining to The Art of Elizabeth Bishop: An International Conference and Celebração in Brazil, 1999.

### [Series VI.](#) CENTENARY EVENTS, NOVA SCOTIA, 2011, 2013

Series VI gathers audio and printed materials relating to Bishop centenary events organized in Nova Scotia by the Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia, 2011.

## Container List

**SERIES I. ELIZABETH BISHOP ESTATE, 1973-circa 2005****Correspondence**

- 1.1 Business related, 1976-1988
- 1.2 Selected correspondence held at Washington University, St. Louis, MO, 1956-1966 (photocopies)
- 1.3-1.8 Baumann, Dr. Anny, 1947-1978 (photocopies)
- 1.9 Bell, Pearl, including correspondence to Alice Methfessel from Elizabeth Bishop, 1989-1990 (photocopies)
- 1.10 Browar, Lisa, 1982-1983
- 1.11 Carlson, Martha, 1983-1985
- 1.12-2.1 Costello, Bonnie, 1982-1989 (book proposal)
- 2.2 Doreski, Carol, 1981-1985
- 2.3 Hamilton, Kitty, 1987 May 8
- 2.4-2.5 Handa, Carolyn, 1983-1983
- 2.6 Harrison, Victoria, 1987-1988
- 2.7 Karp, Vickie, 1988 April-September
- 2.8 Keller, Lynn, 1980-1982
- 2.9 McClatchy, Sandy, 1986 March-May
- 2.10 Millier, Bret, 1985-1988
- 2.11 Stanford, Donald, 1987 March-April
- 2.12 Spires, Elizabeth, 1978-1979
- 2.13 Stowell, Phyllis, 1984-1988
- 2.14-2.15 Travisano, Thomas, 1980-1990 (includes manuscript by Travisano, 1981 August)
- 3.1 Center for Visual History, 1986 April-November
- 10.8-10.9 Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1979-1995
- 3.2 Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, 1984-1985
- 3.3 Nova Scotia Historical Review, 1991 February-April
- 3.4-3.6, 10.10 Requests for rights to reproduce, 1973-1991
- 3.7 - 3.9,  
10.11 Sale of Bishop Papers, 1973-1987 [RESTRICTED]
- 10.12 Reviews, requests, press clippings, 1979-1994

**Writings**

- 4.1 The Collected Prose, approximately 1983 (proof; photocopy, 121 - 221 pp.)
- 4.2 The Collected Prose, 1983 March-June (TS, 1-120 pp.; 6 letters: FSG to Methfessel)
- 4.3 The Collected Prose, 1983 (Title, half-title, copyright page, table of contents, 5 leaves)
- 4.4 The Collected Prose, approximately 1983 (Galley with edits, photocopy, pp. 144-151)
- 4.5 The Collected Prose, approximately 1983 (TS, photocopy, with edits, pp. 1-16, Notes, pp. 1-3, contents, introduction, 9 leaves)
- 4.6 The Collected Prose, approximately 1983 (TS, with edits, pp. 1-69)

- 4.7 The Collected Prose, The Diary of Helena Morley, The Sea and Its Shore, undated (TS, photocopy with edits, pp. 70-145)
- 4.8 The Collected Prose, In Prison, In the Village, approximately 1983 (photocopy with edits, pp. 146-221)
- 6.1 The Collected Prose, 1984 (photocopy with edits, title page for British Edition, 5 leaves)
- 6.2 The Collected Prose, approximately 1983 (galley with edits, pp. 1-137)
- 6.3 The Collected Prose, 1983 July 19 (master galley with edits, pp. 1-138)
- 7.1 The Collected Prose, approximately 1983 (master pages with edits, pp. 1-150)
- 4.9 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, approximately 1982 (mock up, pp. 1-290)
- 4.10 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, 1982 November 2 (partial galley, with edits, 33 leaves)
- 4.11 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, approximately 1982 (TS, with edits, Publisher's Note, Forward, pp. 1-16)
- 4.12 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, approximately 1982 (uncorrected proof, pp. v-287)
- 7.2 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, 1982 August 25 (master galley with edits, pp. 1-97, Index of Titles, 10 leaves)
- 7.3 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, 1982 (uncorrected proof, with edits and photocopy insertions, pp. v-287; includes FSG correspondence, 1982 November)
- 7.4 The Complete Poems, 1927 - 1979, approximately 1982 (master galley with edits, pp. 1-139, Index, pp. 1-5)
- 5.1 The Country Mouse, 1983 March 15 (photocopy with edits and letter from Robert Giroux, pp. 1-23)
- 5.2-5.4 Edgar Allan Poe and the Juke Box, approximately 2005 (photocopy with edits)
- 5.5 Efforts of Affection, An Account of Marianne Moore, 1982 (TS, photocopy with edits, pp. 1 - 37, including letter to Robert Giroux from New Yorker, 1982 March)
- 7.6 Gregorio Valdes, 1983 (photocopy with edits, pp. 141-143, includes letter to A.M. from Robert Giroux, 1983 September 19)
- 5.6 Mercedes Hospital, A Trip to Vigia, To the Botequim and Back, The U.S.A. School of Writing, Primer Class, 1983 (typescripts; photocopies with edits; includes letter to Methfessel from Robert Giroux, 1983 March 24)
- 5.7 North and South, Geography III, 1976 (galley proofs with edits)
- 5.8-5.9 One Art: Letters, 1991 (photocopy, edits by Robert Giroux, includes letter to Methfessel from Robert Giroux, 1991 March 11)
- 5.10 To the Botequim and Back, A Trip to Vigia 1983 (photocopies; edits to A Trip to Vigia by Robert Giroux; includes letter to Methfessel from Robert Giroux, 1983 March 17)
- 5.11 A Trip to Vigia, 1986 (TS with edits, includes two letters from New Yorker and Choate Hall and Stewart, 1986 June)
- 5.12 Uncollected Poems, 1979 (mock ups, photocopies with edits, pp. 261 - 340)
- 5.13 The U.S.A. School of Writing, 1983-1986 (TS, with edits, pp. 1 -17, New Yorker, 1983; includes 2 letters from New Yorker and Choate Hall and Stewart, 1986 June)
- 9.1-9.6 Elizabeth Bishop: Life and the Memory of It, 1969 September 8 (photocopy, draft by Brett Candlish Millier, Stanford University)

#### Bishop Estate

- 8.1 Appraisals, personal belongings, 1979-1980
- 8.2 Appraisals, manuscripts, 1979 October-December
- 10.1 Brazil, real estate, 1980-1982

- 10.2 Clippings, press, 1979 October
- 10.3 Contracts, The Complete Poems of Elizabeth Bishop, publishers agreement, with edits, approximately 1983
- 10.4 Contracts, The Collected Prose of Elizabeth Bishop, publishers agreement, with edits, 1983 June
- 8.3 Copyright law and reference materials, 1979 November
- 10.5 Death certificates, Robert Pinsky's eulogy, 1979 October
- 10.6 Executor's Decree, 1979 January 23
- 8.4 Income Statements, investments, financial accounts, 1979-1983
- 8.5 Letters of condolence, 1979 October-November
- 8.6 Lewis Wharf, Boston, real estate holdings, 1973-1988
- 8.7 Memorial, Harvard University, 1979 October 21
- 8.8 Merrill, James, Ouija board session transcription, undated
- 8.9 Obituary reference material, 1979
- 8.10-8.11 Royalty statements, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983-1985
- 8.12 Taxes, Methfessel affidavit, Giroux, 1979-1984
- 10.7 Will, 1979 November
- 8.13 Will, contested, 1979-1980

### Press Clippings

- 8.15, 10.13 The Complete Poems, reviews, 1983-1984
- 8.14, 10.14 The Complete Prose, reviews, 1983-1985

### Audio Tape

- 9.6 Memorial Service for Elizabeth Bishop, Agassiz House, audio cassette, 1979 October 21
- 9.6 One Art: An Elizabeth Bishop 10th Anniversary Reading, 92nd Street Y, audio cassette, 1989 October 23

## SERIES II. ASSORTED POSTHUMOUS EVENTS, 1981-2025

- Box 11 Bishop reading by James Merrill, American Academy of Arts and Letters — proceedings, 1981
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop and Her Work, Program at Vassar College — general file 1982
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop and Her Work, Program at Vassar College — poster 1982
- Box 11 One Art: Elizabeth Bishop Tenth Anniversary Reading, 1989
- Mapcase - Drawer 37 Advertisement for an issue of the *Streetfare Journal*, which uses part of Bishop's "Rain Towards Morning" along with Frank Stella's *Moby Dick* in the design 1990 (broadside)
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop's *Folded Sunsets: A Staged Reading...*, Seton Hall, 1990
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop's *Folded Sunsets: Poetry Society of America and the Literary Committee of the National Arts Club*, [1992]
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop's Conference and Poetry Festival, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1997
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop's Art of Place and Memory, Acadia University, 1998
- Box 11 Elizabeth Bishop: A Student Symposium, 1999
- Box 12 Redirecting Bishop Studies, American Literature Association, 2000

- Box 16 Jarrell, Bishop, Lowell, and Co.: A Poetry Conference and Celebration, Case Western Reserve University, 2000 (flyer)
- Box 12 An Afternoon with Elizabeth Bishop, *New Yorker* Festival, 2002
- Box 12 *A Safe Harbor for Elizabeth Bishop*, Powerhouse Theater, Vassar College, 2004
- Box 12 *A Safe Harbor for Elizabeth Bishop*, Primary Stages, New York City, 2006
- Box 12 Jenny Holzer benches, Vassar College, 2006
- Box 16 "One Art" for Poems on the Underground, United Kingdom (poster)
- Box 12 "Elizabeth Bishop's Postcards: An Exhibition," exhibition guide and postcard reproductions, 2025

### **SERIES III. VOICES AND VISIONS (1988), 1987-1988**

- Box 11 General file, 1987-1988
- Box 15 Video recording (VHS cassette and 2 DVD copies)
- Box 16 Poster, 1988

### **SERIES IV. 11th ANNUAL KEY WEST LITERARY SEMINAR, 1993**

- Box 11 General file
- Box 13 Participant packet
- Box 13 Photographs by Alice Methfessel
- Box 13 Audiotapes
- Box 16 Newspaper clippings
- Box 12 Exhibition pamphlet, "The Watercolors of Elizabeth Bishop and Photographs by Rollie McKenna," 1993
- Mapcase -  
Drawer 37 Poster (2 copies)

### **SERIES V. THE ART OF ELIZABETH BISHOP (1999), 1999-2000**

- Box 11 General File
- Box 11 Publicity
- Box 11 Participant packet
- Box 11 Brazilian Commentary on Bishop
- Box 16 Brazilian Commentary on Bishop
- Box 11 Articles about Ouro Preto
- Box 11 Excursion following the conference
- Box 11 Painting by Eric Karpeles
- Box 12 Michiro Ocuchi materials, April 2000
- Box 12 Literary pilgrimage Retrospective, April 2000
- Box 14 Announcement cards
- Box 4 Photographs (17 envelopes)
- Box 15 Videocassettes (5 VHS cassettes)
- Box 15 DVDs (2 discs)
- Box 16 Posters (5 items)



Box 16	Tote bag
Box 16	T-shirt

### **SERIES VI. CENTENARY EVENTS, NOVA SCOTIA, 2011, 2013**

Box 12	General file
Box 15	LeBlanc, Suzie, "I Am In Need of Music," CD produced as part of the 2011 Elizabeth Bishop centenary celebrations in Canada, 2013
Box 16	Posters, 2011 (4 items)
Box 16	Newspaper clippings, 2011

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