



# Southwestern Writers Collection

The Wittliff Collections at the Alkek Library  
Texas State University-San Marcos

## A Guide to the Beverly Lowry Papers

**1950-1998**

**Collection 061**

### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Lowry, Beverly
<b>Title:</b>	The Beverly Lowry Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1950-1998
<b>Abstract:</b>	Typescript drafts, correspondence, notes, clippings, journals, and photographs document the writing career of Beverly Lowry. The bulk of the papers relate to four of Lowry's seven published books, with <i>The Perfect Sonya</i> and <i>Crossed Over</i> being the most fully represented. The collection is arranged into the following seven series: Works, Correspondence, Clippings, Publicity, Computer disks, Personal, and Artifacts.
<b>Identification:</b>	Collection 061
<b>Extent:</b>	20 boxes plus artifacts (10 linear feet)
<b>Language:</b>	Materials are written in English
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Southwestern Writers Collection, Special Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos</u></a>

## Biographical Sketch

Beverly Lowry was born August 10, 1938, in Memphis, Tennessee, and moved with her family at age six to Greenville, Mississippi. She attended the University of Mississippi (1956-58) and graduated with a B.A. from Memphis State University in 1960. She married Glenn Lowry in June 1960, and moved with him to Manhattan. There, she pursued acting and experimented in writing. After relocating to Houston in 1965, and sending the younger of her two sons to nursery school Lowry began to write stories, some of which blossomed into novels. Lowry began teaching fiction writing as an associate professor at the University of Houston in 1976, while also pursuing acting, and serving on boards for the Cultural Arts Council of Houston, and for Houston Festival. Her fiction writing has typically been set in Texas and Mississippi. Her first two novels, *Come Back, Lolly Ray* and *Emma Blue* were both set in Eunola, Mississippi a fictional town much like her hometown of Greenville. Her next three novels and one work of non-fiction were set in Texas, with her most recent novel, *The Track of Real Desires*, being again set in the fictional Eunola, Mississippi.

The Lowrys lived just outside San Marcos along the San Marcos River from 1981-1991. One of the Lowrys' two sons, Peter, died in a hit-and-run accident on the highway from San Marcos to their home in 1984. This experience and other personal losses in the early 1980s "caused a marked change in the tone of Lowry's fiction. Gone is her unqualified faith in the future; present is a new preoccupation with fate or chance, even a hint that felicity may invite disaster," (*Contemporary Southern Writers*, St. James Press, 1999). These themes of isolation and alienation appear in *The Perfect Sonya* (1987), *The Track of Real Desires* (1994), and clearly in *Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir* (1992). Beginning in 1989, Lowry approached and visited convicted pickaxe murderer Karla Faye Tucker, on death row in Huntsville, Texas. *Crossed Over* relates the story of Karla Faye Tucker as well as some of Lowry's own personal

story, resulting in “far more than the usual true-crime tale. Lowry interwove the story of her own troubled son with a chilling account of Tucker’s dangerously out-of-control life to achieve an understanding of the human being behind an ostensibly inhuman act; her leap of imagination and empathy enabled her, at last, to make peace with Peter’s death,” (*Texas Monthly*, Feb. 2001). Lowry moved to Los Angeles in the early 1990s, and currently teaches at George Mason University, in Virginia. She continues to write essays and non-fiction, and has been working on a biography of Madame C. J. Walker, the first African-American woman to become a self-made millionaire.

# Scope and Content Note

Numerous typescript drafts, correspondence, notes, clippings, journals and photographs, ranging in date from 1950-1998, document Beverly Lowry's writing career. The bulk of the papers relate to four of Lowry's seven published books, with *The Perfect Sonya* and *Crossed Over* being the most fully represented.

## Series Descriptions

### Series I: Works (1950-1998)

#### Subseries A: Novels (1978-1998)

Annotated typescripts for *Daddy's Girl*, *The Perfect Sonya*, *Crossed Over*, and *The Track of Real Desires* comprise the bulk of this subseries, with extensive research notes, correspondence, and photographs related to *Crossed Over*. Correspondence includes letters from Lowry to Karla Faye Tucker, 1989-1992, 1998, plus scattered letters from Jackie Oncken, John Adams of Great Britain, Ronald Kuntz of Ohio, and Dee Dee of Dallas.

#### Subseries B: Poetry (n.d.)

Works in this subseries are undated, although they appear to date from early on in Lowry's career. Poems have been arranged in alphabetical order by title; most are handwritten or typed.

#### Subseries C: Short Stories (n.d.)

Lowry's short stories have been arranged in alphabetical order. Although they are undated, it is probable that some date from as early as the late 1970s, when Lowry began writing short stories, some of which became novels. One story at the end of this subseries is by Glenn Lowry.

#### Subseries D: Articles / Reviews by Lowry (1979-98)

This subseries includes a sampling of Lowry's published articles and reviews of books by others. Apart from one annotated galley, the remaining six articles and reviews are strictly photocopies of the published item.

#### Subseries E: Research papers and school notes (1956-59, n.d.)

These research papers and school notes are from Lowry's drama and music coursework at the University of Mississippi and at Memphis State University, and are arranged in alphabetical order.

#### Subseries F: Sketches, n.d.

One folder of pencil sketches of flowers, human figures, and other subjects, undated and unsigned, but likely by Lowry.

**Series II: Correspondence (1978-90, n.d.)**

This series is comprised of one folder of correspondence including personal notes and publishers' requests of Lowry to read specific books and comment on them.

**Series III: Clippings (1977-82, n.d.)**

Newsclippings in this series relate to Lowry's writing career, and have been arranged chronologically.

**Series IV: Publicity (n.d.)**

Four undated photographs are included in this series: 3 black and white photographs of a *Come Back, Lolly Ray* manuscript exhibit, and 1 color photograph of Lowry at a book signing for the short story compilation, *Common Bonds*, with other authors.

**Series V: Computer disks (n.d.)**

Fourteen 5.5" floppy disks, many labeled as "Pauline," which was a working title for *The Perfect Sonya*.

**Series VI: Personal (1960-75, n.d.)**

This series includes journals, a college diploma, and materials related to Lowry's sons. The three bound journals are undated, and include notes about Lowry's daily life and writing projects. The college diploma is from Memphis State University, 1960, and includes a torn photograph of Lowry from that time period. The materials related to Lowry's sons include poetry and drawings to and by Peter and Colin Lowry.

**Series VII: Artifacts (n.d.)**

This series contains one item: a Kaypro word processor.

# **Administrative Information**

## **Access Restrictions**

Open for research.

## **Preferred Citation**

Beverly Lowry Papers, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University-San Marcos

## **Acquisition Information**

Gifts donated by Beverly Lowry, 1994-1998.

## **Processing Information**

Processed by Amanda York, 2001. Finding aid revised by Maggie DeBrecht, 2011.

## **Note to Researchers**

Contact the archivist for information about additional materials from this writer that have not yet been fully processed.

# Container List

## Series I: Works

### Novels

#### Box    Folder

		<u>Daddy's Girl</u>
1	1-3	Typescript, ca. 1978?
1	4-6	Typescript, ca. 1980?
		<u>The Perfect Sonya</u>
		“Pauline”
2	1-3	ATS, very early, many handwritten pages re: characters and plot, with sketches
2	4-6	Early ATS, assorted pages
3	1	1977
3	2	“Scraps”
3	3	“A Secret Attachment” synopsis, pages 1-11 and asst.
3	4	“A Fragile Balance” ATS
		Untitled
3	5-6	ATS, “stack 2-B,” pages 1-321
4	1	ATS, “stack 3-A”
4	2-4	ATS, “stack 3-C”
4	5	Assorted pages, through page 195
4	6	Assorted pages, 1-65
5	1	Assorted pages, 41-68
5	2	Assorted pages, 149-251 and others
5	3	Assorted pages, 47-168
5	4	Assorted pages, 47-341 and 26-81
5	5	Assorted pages, 52-183
5	6	Pages 1-224, photocopy
6	1-5	Assorted pages
6	6	“Footwork,” typescript
7	1-2	“The Bear,” typescript
7	3	“Snake Creek,” typescript
		“The Perfect Sonya”
7	4	Typescript, pages 1-222 and 77-125
7	5-6	Typescript, pages 1-307
8	1	Typescript, pages 1-77
8	2-3	Typescript “Copy sent to NY, 11/1985”
8	4-5	Typescript, “1/1986 #1”
8	6-7	Typescript, “1/1986”
9	1-2	Typescript, “2/1986”
9	3	Typescript, fragment, “1/1986 and 6/1986”
9	4	Typescript, “6/25/86”
9	5-7	Typescript, “#2”
9	8-9	Typescript, pages 1-334

## **Series I: Works-continued**

### Novels-continued

#### **Box    Folder**

##### The Perfect Sonya-continued

“The Perfect Sonya”- continued

10    1-2              Typescript, with copy editing

10    3              Galley

##### Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir

Correspondence

10    4              1989

10    5              1990, January-March

11    1              1990, April-July

11    2              1990, August-December

11    3-4              1991

11    5              1992

11    6              1998

11    7              No date

11    8              Notes, 1997 and n.d.- includes photos of interview with Lowry outside the Texas Prison Museum and prison in Huntsville, TX

Clippings (photocopies followed by originals)

11    9              1985

11    10-11              1997

1998

12    1-2              January

12    3-4              February 1-4

13    1-2              February 5-10

13    3-4              February 11-28

13    5-6              March-April

13    7              No date

13    8              German language articles

13    9              New Kids on the Block (collected by Karla Faye Tucker)

13    10-11              Criminal Justice System documents (1997-1998)- petition for 30 day reprieve from execution (also includes e-mail correspondence and articles printed from web regarding Tucker’s execution)

13    12              Texas Department of Criminal Justice public info file on Karla Faye Tucker  
Typescripts- annotated typescripts arranged in chronological order

14    1              12/1989

14    2-3              5/1990

14    4              6/1990

14    5              10/1990

15    1-3              11/1990

15    4-5              No date

16    1-2              No date

16    3-4              Clean typescript

16    5              Publicity- two black and white 5x7 publicity stills, one Knopf booklet of excerpts

## **Series I: Works-continued**

### Novels-continued

#### **Box    Folder**

##### Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir-continued

*New Yorker* article, 1998

16	6	Typescripts and editorial correspondence
16	7	Annotated galley
		Interviews- of Lowry regarding Tucker, videotapes from television programs, audiotapes from radio interviews
17	1	1/1998 Diane Rehm Show, WAMU radio (1 audiocassette) and 1/9/1998 “DAR” (1 audiocassette)
17	2	1/12/1998 Fox in Depth (1 videotape)
17	3	2/2/1998 and 2/3/1998 interviews: Today Show, CNN, and Charles Grodin CNBC (1 videotape)
17	4	2/2/1998 and 2/3/1998 interviews: Biran Williams MSNBC, and CNN Talkback Live (1 videotape)
17	5	No date, Newsnight, BBC (1 videotape)

##### The Track of Real Desires

Typescripts- partial, annotated drafts

18	1	8/21/1989- working title “Those Two”
18	2	8/25/1989
18	3	9/8/1989
18	4	9/11/1989
18	5	No date

#### **Poetry**

18	6	Go Down Death
18	7	I Love You
18	8	IOU
18	9	Murder She Says

#### **Short Stories**

18	10	What Love Can Do
18	11	The Almost Perfect Day
18	12	And Nice Girls Don’t Finish at All
18	13	A Half Moon is a Broken Moon
18	14	Home for Christmas
18	15	If It’s Not One Thing, It’s Another
18	16	Letha-or-Sometimes Knowing Knows Nothing
18	17	[Lila Lee Shannon Story]
18	18	[Lily story fragments]
18	19	Luckiest Person I Know
18	20	Mother’s Day
19	1	Old Love on a Cold Night
19	2	One of Life’s Small Necessities
19	3	The Pail Lady
19	4	Some Time to Myself
19	5	Thomas

## **Series I: Works-continued**

### Short Stories-continued

#### **Box      Folder**

19	6	Unanswered Prayer
19	7	Virgin
19	8	Untitled
19	9	Notes and fragments
19	10	It's Just a GAME, by Glenn Lowry

#### **Articles / Reviews by Lowry**

19	11	"Born to Preen: Why Southern Girls Dominate Beauty Contests" September 1997 (photocopy of published article)
19	12	<i>The Creoletown Crux</i> , 1980 (photocopy of published review)
19	13	"Grilled Portobellos and William Faulkner," <i>New York Times</i> , 4/1998
19	14	<i>The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor</i> , edited by Sally Fitzgerald, review by Lowry, 1979 annotated galley
19	15	"Puberty" <i>Southern Magazine</i> , n.d. (photocopy of published article)
19	16	"Separated at Birth?" (film review) <i>American Way</i> , n.d. (photocopy of published article)
19	17	"Southern Daddies, Southern Girls" <i>Southern Magazine</i> , 2/1987 (photocopy of published article)

#### **Research Papers and School Notes, 1950s**

19	18	British theater paper, n.d.
19	19	English drama class notes, n.d.
19	20	An Examination of Barabas, 12/1959
19	21	I Speak for Democracy
19	22	King Lear- an analysis paper
19	23	Mourning Become Electra
19	24	Music 423 class notes
19	25	Original Oratory
19	26	The Paths of Glory
19	27	Play fragment, untitled
19	28	Religion
19	29	Success in Securing Desirable Employment, 12/1956
19	30	We Seek the Higher Things

#### **Sketches**

19	31	Sketches
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## **Series II: Correspondence**

20	1	1978-1990, n.d.
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## **Series III: Clippings**

20	2	1977-1982 (scrapbook of clippings was removed to room 780 row 9)
20	3	No date

## **Series IV: Publicity, n.d.**

### **Box      Folder**

20	4	Three black and white photographs of <i>Come Back, Lolly Ray</i> manuscript exhibit
20	5	One color photograph of Lowry at book signing for <i>Common Bonds</i> , with other authors

## **Series V: Computer disks, n.d.**

20	6-7	Computer disks
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## **Series VI: Personal, 1960-1975, n.d.**

20	8-10	Journals, n.d.
20	11	Diploma. Memphis State University, 1960
20	12	Children- poetry, drawings to and by Peter and Colin Lowry, 1966-1975

## **Series VII: Artifacts, n.d.**

-	-	Kaypro word processor
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