

SOUTHWESTERN WRITERS COLLECTION
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Puckerbrush Press
Collection of Mary Gray Hughes
1977-2002

Collection 078

2 boxes (.75 linear feet)

Acquisition: Gift donated by Puckerbrush Press. **Note:** Contact the SWWC for information about additional materials from this writer that have not yet been fully processed.

Access: Open for Research.

Processed by: Krista McDonald, 2005

Biographical Note

Mary Gray Hughes, the daughter of Texas author and newspaperman, Hart Stilwell and his first wife, Mary Gray Seabury, was born in Brownsville, Texas on August 25, 1930. A prolific and respected author in her own right, Hughes wrote and was published almost continuously for nearly three decades from 1969 until dying from cancer in Chicago, IL in September, 1999. Throughout her life, she received numerous awards for her writing. She received the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Creative Writing (1978), was Illinois Writer in Residence from 1977-80, had her stories anthologized in *Best American Short Stories* (1962, 1972), had her stories mentioned in *Best American Stories* (1974-5), and was elected a member of the Texas Institute of Letters in 1983.

Hughes graduated from Brownsville High School in 1947 then attended The University of Mexico for a summer before completing her education at The University of Texas and Barnard College. While at Barnard, she participated in Phi Beta Kappa and graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1951 with a Bachelor of Arts. After receiving a Fulbright Scholarship for two years, she pursued a Master of Letters in Social Anthropology. She graduated in 1953.

In this same year, she married J.R.T. Hughes. Moving to Illinois, Hughes gave birth to a son, Benjamin in 1960, and twin girls, Charis and Margaret, in 1962. Starting in 1954, Hughes worked continuously at a variety of jobs – almost all in the teaching, publishing, and writing fields. She was an editor at Bowker Publishing Co. and People's Book Club, and was the Writer-in Residence of the Illinois Arts Council. She conducted writing workshops at high schools and colleges; served as consultant for the Illinois Arts Council; was writer-consultant to the graduate program in Creative Writing for the University of South Alabama; lecturer in English at Lake Forest College; lecturer in English at Northwestern University, and a judge for the Texas Institute of Letters.

All the while, Hughes worked on her own writing and had numerous short stories, poems, and books published. Notable among her works are the short story collections,

The Calling and *Cora's Seduction and other Stories*, and the novel, *The Empty Lot*. This collection of papers represent the materials published by Puckerbrush Press as *Cora's Seduction and Other Stories*, and were donated to Texas State University's Southwestern Writers Collection by the Press in 2003. The SWWC has an additional collection of Hughes' papers donated by her children.

Sources:

Mary Gray Hughes Papers

Scope and Contents Note

Personal papers, correspondence, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, computer disks and numerous copies of Hughes short stories, story lines, poems, and letters to editors fill .75 linear feet (2 boxes) documenting Hughes's 2002 Puckerbrush Press collection, *Cora's Seduction and Other Stories*.

The collection is arranged in four main series, Personal Documents, Correspondence with James Kelman, Computer Disks, and Writings by Hughes. The first series contains letters and documents of a personal nature to Hughes and vary in subject matter. The second series consists exclusively of correspondence with James Kelman, editor of *Cora's Seduction*. Numerous letters from Kelman include newspaper and magazine clippings related to the book. The third series of the collection is Computer Disks related to the publication of the book.

Series four comprises the bulk of the collection. Writings by Hughes includes drafts of all of the stories published in *Cora's Seduction*: "Cora's Seduction," "In a Strange Land," "A Few Spoken Words," "Life Blood," "Welcome Strangers, and Others Too," "Third House, on the Left," "Reunion," "Torn Leaves," and "The Long Drive," as well as drafts of numerous other short stories, story lines, poems, poem ideas, that were not selected for the compilation. Further description of this and other series in the collection are available in the following section.

Series Description

Series I: Personal Documents, 1997-2002, n.d.

Box 1

Arranged chronologically, Personal Documents contains letters, a postcard, an e-mail print-out, an application, and personal information generated by Hughes or her family members. Included are letters by Hughes' daughter and son as well as a response to an e-mail addressed to Hughes, Hughes' application to the Authors Guild, and her curriculum vitae.

Series II: Correspondence with James Kelman, 1977-1988, n.d.

Box 1

Arranged chronologically, Correspondence includes letters and related material dealing exclusively with James Kelman and the publication of *Cora's Seduction*. Included are letters from Kelman to Hughes with notes, newspaper clippings and magazine articles about Kelman, and a review Hughes did of Kelman's work.

Series III: Computer Disks, n.d.

Box 1

Contains 6 computer disks.

Series IV: Writings by Hughes, n.d.

Boxes 1 and 2

This series contains works generated by Hughes and constitutes the bulk of the collection. It is sub-divided into Short Stories and Poetry by Hughes. Short Stories are further sub-divided into Short Stories and Story Lines. Both are arranged alphabetically and arranged according to the type of document generally in order by handwritten note, typescript draft, typescript, typescript copy, copy, then submission to editor.

Poetry is sub-divided into a Poem List, Poems, "Journey to a Hard Conclusion" edits, "Journey to a Hard Conclusion" printout, Untitled Handwritten Poems, and Submissions to Editors. Poem List consists of numerous drafts of a handwritten list of poems by the author. Additionally, the poems are arranged alphabetically and according to document type mainly consisting of printout drafts. "Journey to a Hard Conclusion" edits contains drafts as collected by the author of poems included in the book of the same title arranged alphabetically and by document type. Of special note is the "Journey to a Hard Conclusion" sub-series. This folder contains a complete printout copy of the book. Untitled Handwritten Poems contains random poems written on various papers. Again, these poems were collected and written by the author and because they contain no title have no fixed arrangement. Finally Submissions to Editors are letters to and from various editors submitting, accepting, or refusing Hughes' work. Arranged

chronologically, this folder was only altered from its original submission by arranging in date order. All other material grouped together is as submitted by the author.

Container List

Box Folder

1 1 Series I: Personal Documents, 1997-2002, n.d.

Letter to Hughes from daughter, January 3, 1977
E-mail letter by son to Hughes, June 14, 1999
E-mail letter from James Bryant and Mary Hill to Hughes, August.
9, 1999
Internet Authors Guild Application, August 16, 1999
Postcard from daughter to Connie Hunting, June 10, 2002
Hughes curriculum vitae, n.d.

1 2 Series II: Correspondence with James Kellman, 1977- 1998, n.d.

Oct. 14, 1977, includes note
June 21, 1979
July 14, 1980
Oct. 30, 1989, includes newspaper clipping
March 7, 1991
Aug. 23, 1998, includes newspaper clippings

Undated

unknown originator-vitae of James Kellman
3 letters from James Kellman
newspaper clipping about James Kellman
Hughes' review of James Kellman with note

1 3 Series III: Various Computer Disks

6 computer disks

Box Folder

Series IV: Writings by Hughes

Short Stories by Hughes

Short Stories (arranged alphabetically)

1	4	"The Beach" "Cora's Seduction" "A Few Spoken Words" "In a Strange Land" "Let Me Take You Away From It All" "Life Blood"
1	5	"The Long Drive"-
2	1	"Merging in San Francisco"- "A Mother's Love"- "New Venture" "The Old Woman of the Mountain" "Reunion" "Third House, On the Left" "Three Ages on a Park Bench" "Torn Leaves" "Welcome Strangers, and Others Too" "The Valley of Zibelu"
2	2	"You Go On"

Story Lines

2	3	"Ashamed"- handwritten draft "The Conflictor"- handwritten draft and note "Death Came at Least"- handwritten notes "Dutiful"- handwritten draft "Everybody Knows Andy"- handwritten note "Faithful"- handwritten draft "The Flight"- handwritten draft with note "Goose Bumps"- handwritten note "How Things Happen"- handwritten draft
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Box Folder

Series IV: Writings by Hughes

Short Stories by Hughes

Story Lines, continued

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|---|---|--|
| 2 | 3 | "Indigenous Fruit"- handwritten draft
"Letter to a Lady Long Since Dead"- handwritten draft
"Man In Love"- handwritten draft
"Once on the Phone"- handwritten notes
"Sunday Morning on the Docks"- typescript draft
"Virtuous"- handwritten draft
untitled handwritten draft |
| 2 | 4 | "Haskell and Millie"- 2 handwritten notes, drafts,
typescript draft |

Poetry by Hughes

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|---|---|-----------|
| 2 | 5 | Poem List |
|---|---|-----------|

Poems (arranged alphabetically)

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|---|---|--|
| 2 | 6 | "Alternatives"
"Belies Belief"
"Bent"
"Cold Christmas"
"Common Ground"
"For Dorothy"
"For Lydia"
"Gift"
"Goose Bumps"
"How About Those"
"A Mind is a More Complex by Far than Bark"
"The Only Sound"
"Request"
"Requiem"
"Revisions May Not Be Improvements" |
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Box Folder

Series IV: Writings by Hughes

Poetry by Hughes

Poems, continued

2	6	"There Must be Something" "The Undepressed" "The Unsuccessful" "Vermont before Snow" "Viewpoint" "Winter Daybreak"
2	7	<u>"Journey to a Hard Conclusion" (collection of poems)</u> handwritten notes "Friends" "Here at Last" "Journey to a Hard Conclusion" "What a Joke"
2	8	"Journey to a Hard Conclusion"
2	9	Untitled Handwritten Poems
2	10	Submissions to Editors, 1994-1998, n.d.